

ANIMALS & MEN



THE JOURNAL OF THE CENTRE FOR FORTEAN ZOOLOGY



MONSTER OF THE MERE

The exclusive story of the search for the biggest
and oldest freshwater fish in England

Plus: The Bunnyman; Chinese Lake Monster; news;
reviews; letters and much more.....

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Animals & Men #28

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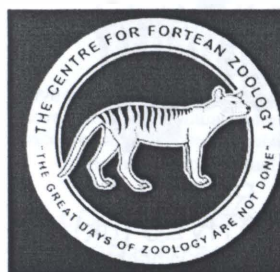
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EDITORIAL

jonathan downes



Dear Friends,

Welcome to another issue of the world's only fortean zoological journal. It hardly seems like three months since we published the last issue, but it is! This, our tenth anniversary year has been a momentous one for us. This summer we have completed two important investigations, the details of the first can be found in this issue. Indeed there has been so much activity in recent months that we have had to add *four* more pages to cover it all!

We have also, due to the good graces of travel agency, *The Gambia Experience* www.gambia.co.uk been able, after years of planning, to finally arrange our long awaited expedition to The Gambia to solve the mystery of the carcass of Bungalow Beach once and for all. While we are there, we intend to continue Chris Moiser's researches into the legends surrounding Ninki-Nanka – a dragon-like beast which has terrorised broad swathes of West Africa for centuries.

We have raised the funds for the mission, and are awaiting the relevant permits from the Gambian Government to allow us to dig on the beach and remove parts of the skeleton for testing should we find anything.

As can be seen on the next page, the CFZ has grown somewhat since its inception. In order to do what we do, we are now a large organisation with representatives all over the world and consultants from many disciplines. In order to carry on the work which we have planned we need to expand apace and raise significant sums of money. If you have any ideas about fund raising, or indeed if you have money, time, equipment, knowledge or expertise that you would like to donate to the CFZ please drop us a line. If it weren't for YOU we wouldn't exist.

Here's to the next ten years

The great days of zoology are not done....

Bernard Heuvelmans

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If you are interested please
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editorial address

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edited and compiled by jon and richard

NEW AND REDISCOVERED PARK LIFE



Reuters, on the 25th July announced that a new species of tiny centipede that may well be the world's smallest - has been discovered in Central Park in the heart of New York. It is the first new species in more than a century to be discovered in the massive park, a New York City oasis that attracts more than 20 million visitors each year.

The adult of the new species grows to be about 0.4 inches long, (about half the usual length of centipedes). The Central Park centipede, which has 82 legs and lives in the leaves and sticks littering the park, is so unusual that scientists have classified it as the only species in a completely new genus.

"It's an exciting thing. It's always a celebration when you find a new creature on the Earth. It's pretty interesting finding it in our own backyard," said Michael Novacek, senior vice president and provost of science at the American Museum of Natural History in New York. *"It tells us something shocking about what we don't know, rather than what we know. There are about 1.5 million species named, but there could be as many as 10-50 million species living on this planet,"* Novacek added

Museum scientists found about 10 of the centipedes in two different sections of the park that spans 843 acres in Manhattan in samples taken during the spring, summer, fall and winter of 1998. They sent samples to Richard Hoffman, considered the greatest expert on centipedes and millipedes in the United States. When Hoffman, the curator of invertebrates at the Virginia Museum of Natural History, could not identify them, samples were sent to centipede specialists in Italy, who named the previously unknown species after Hoffman - *Nannarrup hoffmani*.

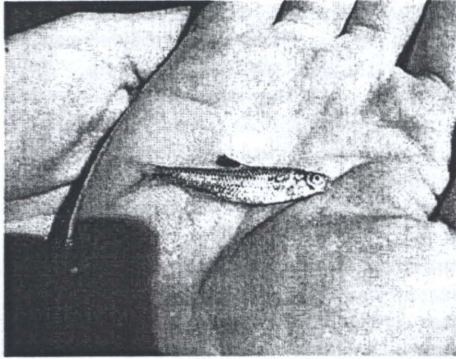
"It's a new genus, and the group that it belongs to comes from Asia, so it's very strange to find it here. We assume from that that it was transported from Asia, but it hasn't been found there either, and that's strange," said Kefyn Catley, a professor at Rutgers University and one of the scientists who worked on the survey.

PENNSYLVANIAN PECULIARITIES

The Bucks County (PA) Courier Times, for September 10, 2002, reported that the pugnose minnow (*Opsopoeodus emiliae*) has turned up in Pennsylvania. It is a common fish from Ohio to Louisiana, but until now has never been reported from Pennsylvania. It is only one of a plethora

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of species which have been discovered or rediscovered in the state over recent months.



- The Virginia willow [*itea virginica*] is actually a small shrub. The last recorded find of Virginia willow in Pennsylvania was in 1841, a disappearing act that ended when arboretum botanists found it in Black Ditch County Park. It is believed to be the only one in Pennsylvania, and was rediscovered in 1999.
- The clasping-leaved St. John's Wort [*hypericum gymnanthm*], last seen in Bucks in 1865, was rediscovered in Huntingdon County in 2000.
- In spring this year a graduate student at Penn State came across an Eastern spadefoot toad in Centre County, 50 miles west of where it's usually seen.
- In 1998, just as the state department of transportation was all set to build a bridge over Marshalls Creek in Monroe County, up popped two rare fish, the ironcolor shiner and the bridle shiner. While the bridle shiner was merely known to be decreasing around the state, the ironcolor shiner only lives in Marshalls Creek, as far as scientists can tell. The fish, big time. The PennDOT rerouted the highway, and Penn State scientists started

raising both species of shiners in captivity.

SUMBA STRIGIFORM

On Tuesday 3rd September 2002. *Ananova* announced the discovery of a new species of owl in Indonesia. The University of Canberra team made the discovery after travelling to Sumba to investigate reports of a mystery species. They say a specimen found on the island has turned out to be a previously unknown member of the *Ninox* genus, and have named it the Little Sumba Hawk-Owl. The researchers fear the bird could be endangered, but say further research is needed.

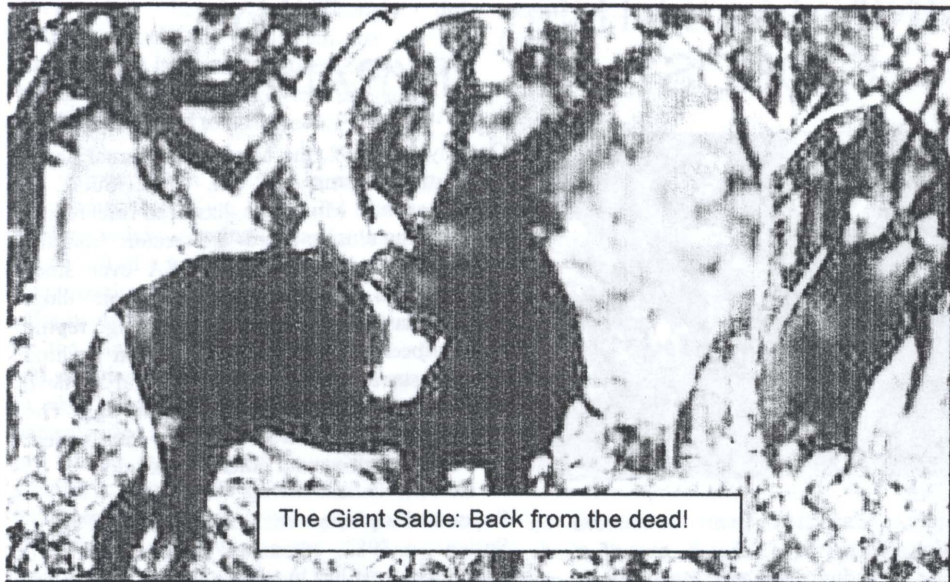
RETURN OF THE GIANT SABLE

In February, Adelino Serras Pires, one of Africa's last explorers and conservationists of the previous millennium announced that The Giant Sable Antelope, one of the most regal and impressive large animals of Africa, is extinct.

He told greensponsors.com in a private interview that, despite some claims of sightings, there has been no scientific proof of a single living Giant Sable for some ten years or more. On the 14th August Reuters announced that an expedition was headed to Angola to search for the creatures.

Hopes were high from the start. "There is a lot of speculation that these animals have gone extinct, but if they have not we can start a programme to protect them," expedition head

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The Giant Sable: Back from the dead!

Wouter van Hoven of the University of Pretoria told Reuters. Male giant sables have elegant horns which curve backwards and can grow to an astonishing five feet (1.60 metres) or more.

Richard Estes, a Smithsonian research associate from the United States who studied the animals in the early 1970s, said he was hopeful of finding some in the Luando Reserve in central Angola.

"We estimated there were 1,000 to 2,000 giant sables in that area (30 years ago)," said Estes, who is joining the two-week expedition which will conduct most of its work by helicopter.

Angola's government and its arch-foe the UNITA rebel movement signed a cease-fire agreement in April, raising hopes for peace in a country that has known little but ruinous

civil war since independence from Colonial Portugal in 1975.

The disastrous civil-war destroyed much wildlife in the tropical country, which once teemed with animals. Its huge herds of elephants were shot out by both the Angolan Government forces and UNITA, who sold ivory from the tusks to fund its war efforts

On Friday, 30 August, Professor van Hoven, said he was excited to announce that:

"Three separate sightings of the giant sable antelope were recorded," he said. "The first sighting was of two adult bulls, followed by a second bull and two juveniles."

But he added that the giant sable, which only lives in one particular part of Angola, is extremely rare and is in need of protection.

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PINING FOR THE FJORDS?



In July, Associated Press announced an exciting rediscovery. After a gap of ninety years the Indigo Winged Parrot has been rediscovered near the summit of the highest volcano in Colombia. An expedition from Bogota University found the flock of 14 indigo-winged parrots in the Andes. The bird has only been sighted once before, near the peak of the same volcano in 1911. The Times says seven of the birds were captured and their remains are on display in America but notes of their breeding habits were not taken. The team from Bogota University are now taking notes, photographs and video footage of the birds to help develop a conservation plan for the species and its habitat.

Dr Robert Prys-Jones, head of birds at the Natural History Museum in London, advised the team. He said:

"This is remarkable. They have found perhaps the last flock of surviving indigo-winged parrots, making it one of the greatest wildlife discoveries to date. We were concerned that this spectacular parrot was lost for ever."

TINY TYRANNOSAUR

On July 30, 2002, the Minnesota Journal had a very strange story to tell. Nick Sucik, a researcher from Minnesota, has been researching reports of an elusive lizard-like creature from the wilds of the Southwestern USA ever since hearing tales of "river dinosaurs" from those involved in the reptile trade. The strange reptile is described as walking exclusively on its hind legs; to stand about 3 feet tall; and to have armlike appendages instead of forelegs. The reptile usually is seen near a wet environment and moves swiftly, with grace, Sucik said.

Reports of sightings trickled in, first in Pagosa Springs in 1982, then in Pueblo, Sucik said. Most recently it has been reported from Cortez. An *Unsolved Mysteries* episode had featured the story of a Cortez couple who had been visiting in Arizona. While there, the couple apparently saw the body of a reptile unlike any they had ever seen before. *"It looked like a toy to them,"* Sucik said, and when they told their tale, *"No one took them seriously."* According to Sucik, a woman and her daughter e-mailed him details of a similar sighting that took place in 2001 as they were driving in the Yellow Jacket area. *"Suddenly, this thing runs out. At first, they thought it was a young deer, because of its size,"* Sucik said.

The women described it as having a long neck and skinny legs like a bird. However, it had no feathers and its "arms" seemed to go out of its upright neck rather than its body. The women estimated that the creature would measure about 5 feet, if it were outstretched from neck to tail. *"It looked to them like a cross between a bird and a dinosaur."* When they got home, each drew a picture of the creature and realized they had each seen exactly the same thing, he said.

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Sucik said it's possible the reptile is an escapee from trade in exotic pets. Even so, the description doesn't match anything known, he said. He welcomes reports of sightings at nicksucik@hotmail.com or 22969 Old Gov Trail, Nisswa, MN 56468.

RICHARD FREEMAN COMMENTS: It is quite feasible that there is a hitherto unrecognised species of agamid or iguanid lurking in the southwestern United States. Species of both families are known to rear up on their hind legs. Monitors are also known to do this but there are no known species of New World varanid.

SKIN DEEP

The case for the continued survival of the Shamanu or Japanese Wolf (see A&M24) was strengthened by this report from the *Daily Yomiuri Online* (5/25/02). Journalist Yomiuri Shimbun told how a pelt owned by a building materials dealer in Chichibu, Saitama Prefecture, has been identified as a Japanese wolf, a species believed to be extinct. It is only the fifth such pelt known to be in the country and the eighth in the world. The discovery came after the dealer gave the pelt to a museum run by a Shinto shrine in Otakimura in the prefecture, which exhibits a Japanese wolf, or Nihon ookami, pelt discovered this spring, the first such discovery in 55 years. The dealer's pelt previously had belonged to Masanobu Iizuka, 62, who received it from Yoshiyuki Sekine, 60, an electrical engineer. According to Sekine, his grandfather bought the pelt—from a wolf caught in Mt. Mitsumine in the same prefecture—from a hunter in 1922 with money he received from selling his land.. The pelt is 1.2 meters long, not counting its 30-centimeter-long tail.

Yoshinori Imaizumi, a specialist in Japanese wolves as well as a former director of Science Museum in Ueno, Tokyo, identified the pelt as that of a Japanese wolf because of distinguishing marks that included a blunt-ended tail, black spots on the forelegs and a pheromonal gland inside the tail. Although it is unknown when the animal was killed, its date of purchase is significantly later than 1906, when the last known specimen was killed.

LAKE AND SEA MONSTERS



MICHIGAN-SHENANEGANS

Elizabeth Clem, our Indiana correspondent has been very busy in recent weeks ever since Richard e-mailed her with a list of lakes and rivers in her state which are reputed to be haunted by monsters. She has spent inordinate lengths of time chasing up these reports and has taken her setbacks with good humour and a dogged determination to unearth witnesses which puts many more recognised monster hunters to shame.

She wrote to us in August:

All these stories are from Lake Michigan, but I don't know where on the Lake. Lake Michigan touches the northwest corner of Indiana.

* My friend and I were fishing in a small

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rowboat (it had a motor, I am no expert on boats though. All I know is that it is slow) in Lake Michigan on September 10th, 2000. My other two friends were not too far away from us fishing. We had only caught one small fish and decided to use it as bait. I stuck the fish onto my hook, and let the line drop. No sooner then I dropped it in that I felt a sharp tug. My friend grabbed the pole too and I slipped onto the string. My hands were cut very deep when the pole was pulled closer to the water. When we finally retrieved the pole, we realized it had given up and we still had the fish. We decided to go back really quick. Then our boat was tipped over and we were ejected into the water.

My friend immediately panicked saying that the "thing" in the water was going to get us. We tried to tip the boat back but realized it was no use. We scrambled onto the top of it. I told him the last hope was to do what I saw in the movie *Titanic*: try to keep the boat alanced. He sat on one side, I sat on the other, and we were scared out of our pants. For about 15 seconds nothing happened, then the smooth sea bacame rough around us. A little head stuck up in the water, about 1000 feet away from us.

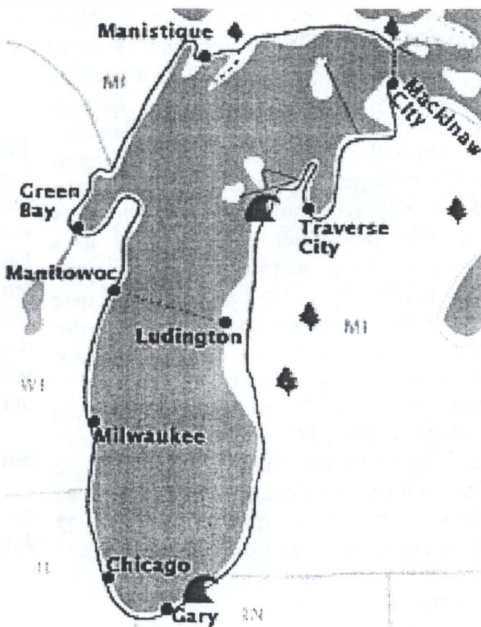
It was slender and smooth, with blackish hair on its "neck". It had a long horse-like snout. It was swimming to the left of us but kept its eye on us the whole time. My friend started to freak again but I told him to stay still as it left. We just waited and screamed our friends' names to come and get us. We left our boat, and I wonder if it is still floating around, or if it became a meal for a seas serpent. STorM866@aol.com

* This is a true story I swear.....last summer I went to visit my brother at college and we went fishing at Lake Michigan, my friend went with me well we were there maybe two and a half hours and hadn't even felt a nibble the whole time my brother was talking about tipping the boat over knowing I can't swim and didn't have sense enough to bring a life jacket then we felt the boat move and I told my brother to quit playing around and he said it wasn't him so I looked over the side of the boat and saw a big fat black thing swim fast out from under the

boat I screamed and scooted to the middle of the boat my brother said it was probably just a fish I said it was just to dang big to be a fish but never the less my brother was determined to catch at least one fish then about 20 ft away from us I saw a giant head come out of the water

Well obviously everyone else saw it too; it looked around and went back under water so then my brother thought it would be a good idea to leave and he said *"screw the dang fish that thing probably ate them all"* started up the motor and we left: valverde@mesh.net

* Hi me and My friend were aboard the Odyssey 2 boat on Lake Michigan, we were uptop talking about video games when we noticed a weird animal swim by the side of the ship, we could not make out what the thing was, all we saw was a long body like a snake, tha'ts all we saw.
From: TBONEJAR86@aol.com



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SHADES OF SHIELDS

Twenty five years after our resident Surrealchemist, Tony 'Doc' Shields presented the world with some extraordinary images of the Loch Ness beastie a wireless flash bulletin on August 13, 2002 announced that Kevin Carlyon – a witch from Hastings was planning to visit the Scottish lake on that September 2nd and perform a ritual he claims will raise Nessie from her watery hide-out.

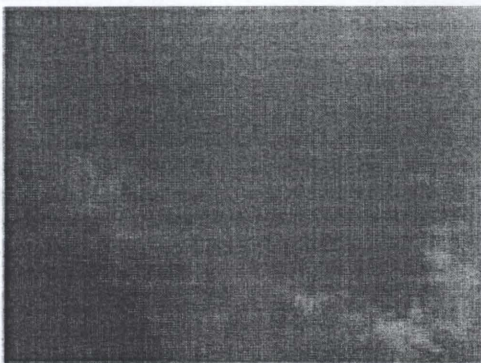
He was confident that his spell will work, but admits:

"If Nessie does pop up and flip her tail at the crowd, you'd probably have half the Scottish Highlands shiting themselves."

However, we have not received any reports of his success or otherwise, despire claims that the whole affair would be webcast and we await the outcome with mildly baited breath.

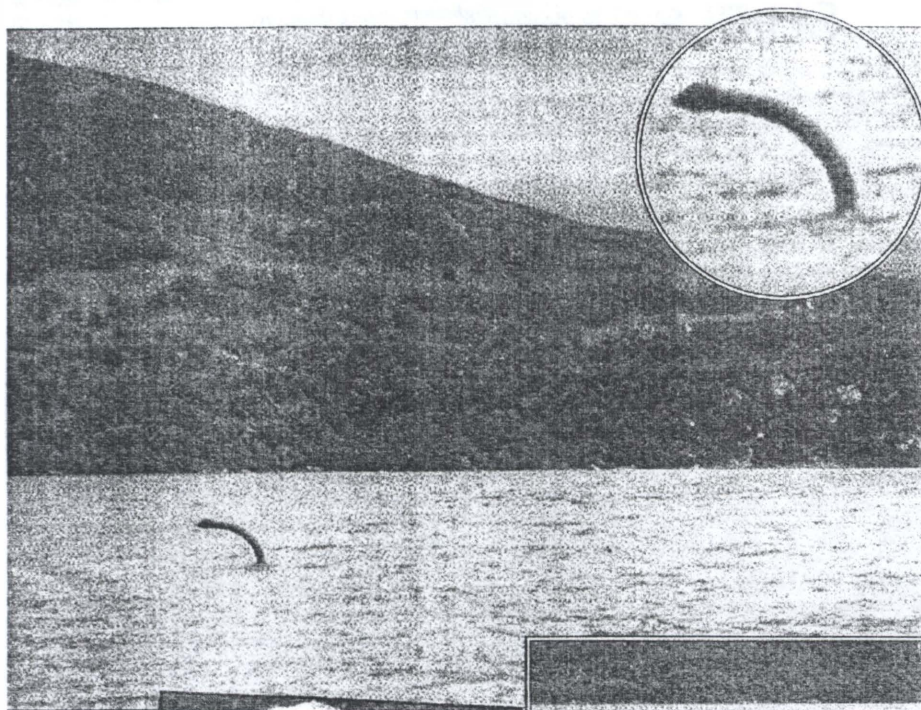
The Nessie pix which *did* appear this summer were, to our mind at least, spectacularly unimpressive. Whether they have anything to do with Mr Carlyon and his quasi-magickal prestidigitations, the CFZ would not care to guess.

We shall just wait and see.



These underwater pictures were taken by webcam this summer by Andrew Whyley. We believe that they show a large salmon severely afflicted with a fungus growth. The picture on the top right in particular shows the characteristic growth pattern of a parasitic fungus.

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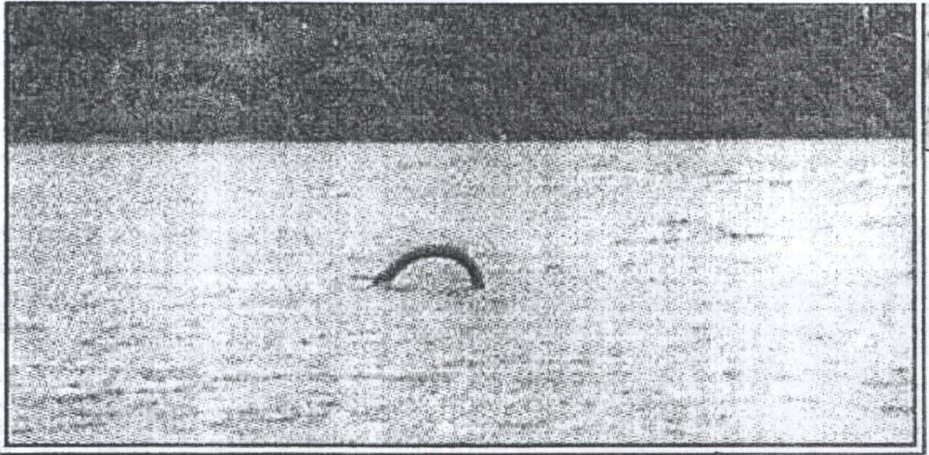


This set of pictures are from *The Daily Mail* and are printed courtesy of those jolly nice people at the Copyright Liberation Front. They are vaguely reminiscent of those published in another daily newspaper last year (see A&M 24) and purport to show a large, long-necked creature leaping out of the water. If it is, indeed a living creature (a subject on which, we are not really prepared to comment at the moment) it would appear to be an eel of some description although the weird earthworm shaped head is unlike any living species of eel known to us.

Having pinched their pictures we would not wish to anger the legal department of the *Daily Mail* any further by suggesting that these pictures are in any way fakes. However, if any readers of this journal have a copy of Adobe *Photoshop* v.6 installed on their computers they could do a lot worse than look closely at the pixellation of the image where the "neck" joins the water.

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More pictures from the *Daily Mail*.....



...it lunges and ducks back into the water ...



The peculiar looping movements of the object depicted in this photograph are more akin to what one would expect from a terrestrial invertebrate than from anything that could reasonably be expected to be living in the waters of a Scottish Lake. Although we are certain that someone will come out with the supposition that Nessie is, after all, a giant aquatic caterpillar, we would rather look enigmatic and maintain a dignified silence.

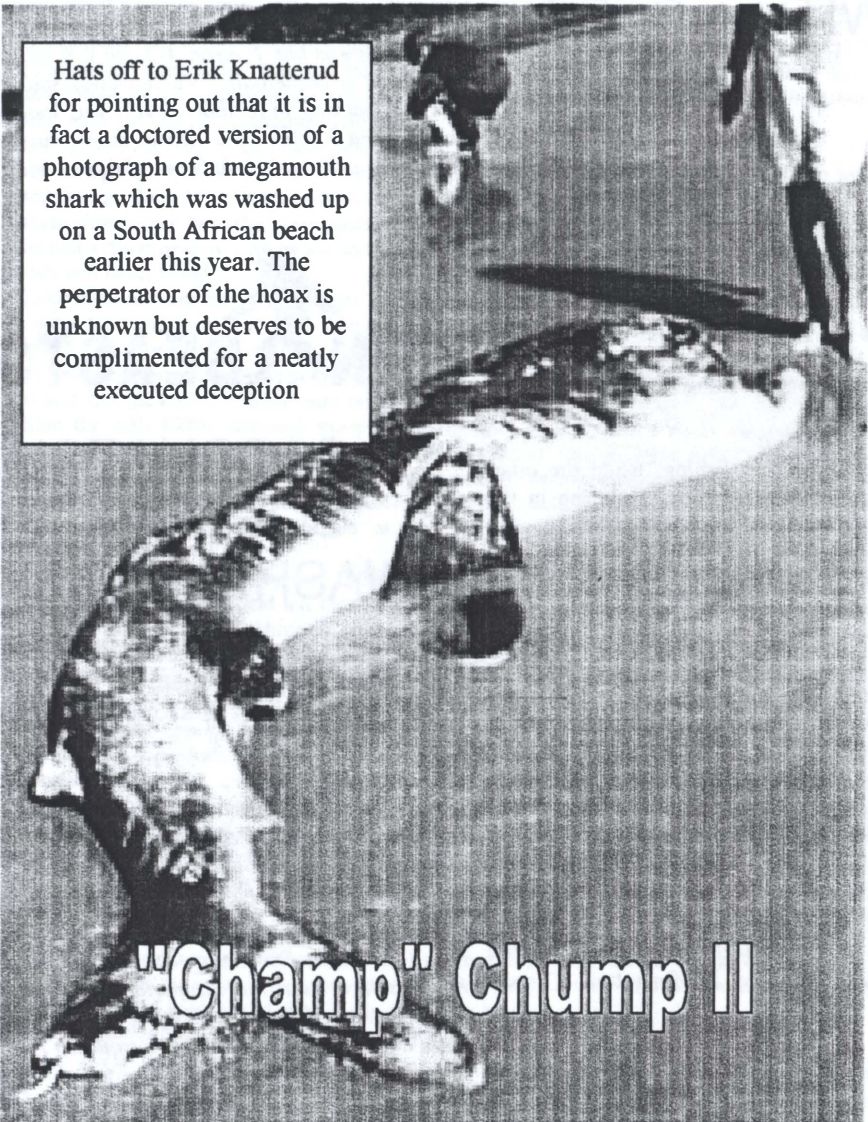
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This picture, purporting to be of a dead specimen of 'Champ' - the monster of Lake Champlain was circulated on the Internet in August 2002. For a while certain folk within the cryptoinvestigative community believed it to be genuine although others were sceptical...



"Champ" Chump I

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Hats off to Erik Knatterud for pointing out that it is in fact a doctored version of a photograph of a megamouth shark which was washed up on a South African beach earlier this year. The perpetrator of the hoax is unknown but deserves to be complimented for a neatly executed deception

"Champ" Chump II

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ENCOUNTER WITH A DEEP ONE

On the second of August the *Rhode Island Herald* reported an incident which might well have come from the pen of her most famous son. Fall River residents Dennis Vasconcellos, Rachel Carney, Joey Mailloux, Tracy Roberts, a young child and another woman were at Teddy's Beach in the Island Park section of Portsmouth, when things got a little bit scary.

Half the group was fishing, while the other half were either swimming or playing in the sand. But what seemed to be the perfect summer afternoon got turned upside down the moment Vasconcellos heard his fiancé, Carney, scream.

Carney was screaming for help, yelling that something was after her. An unknown ominous sea creature seemed to be toying with Carney, who was swimming beyond the "Danger" sign posted at the quiet beach.

The sea creature -- described as being about 15-feet long, with four-inch teeth, greenish-black skin and a white belly -- was swimming around Carney and popping its head out of the water to expose its teeth and hiss in a manner that could not soon be forgotten, Carney said.

"I was deep out in the water and kept hearing this hissing sound. Then I saw its head come up showing me its big teeth," Carney said. "It kept rolling while it was swimming and knocking into my feet. I just froze."

In the meantime, Vasconcellos said he swam out to her aide and just grabbed her from the backside and told her *"don't look back."*

"This thing was big. I mean its head was almost the size of a basketball," Vasconcellos said. "I just kept backing in to shore, but it was looking at me and hissing. The other people around there were pulling their kids out of the water."



MR SASQUATCH GOES TO WASHINGTON

An uncredited report datelined Ft. Lewis, Washington April 2002 was circulating around the Internet this spring.

The author claimed to have *"found info on Sasquatch showing up on the north side of Fort Lewis US Army Base Tacoma, Washington."*

The area is used by the Rangers as training area called Cat Lake. For many years now the Army Rangers have run into Sasquatch in this area and now have quietly been using this area for night maneuvers because of the Sasquatch I have talked to Retired Rangers and they tell me there are Sasquatch in that area for sure. It has been noted in their handbook of animals of the Northwest - and Sasquatch is in the book by Army personal since 1950's maybe longer

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(unknown at this time). The person I spoke to wishes to remained unknown he his retired since 1992 and has a business in Olympia area and doesn't want it to hurt business. Some others I have talked with who are still in Army Rangers and have confirmed this report.

They also don't want their names released because of what may happen to them. One fellow is in California who did see sasquatch by Cat Lake.

It scared a lot of them it was at night it came to their camp area with in 50 yards it was spotted in night scope new Gen Model 3 and his squad picked up and moved on request of CO on duty at the time.

The creature was described as 8 ft. tall black hair on body from head to feet and arms it made a grunting sound almost like pig but deeper and longer.

The CO has been at Fort Lewis from 1982-2001 and has been sent to a base overseas since 911 took place. There are many rumors of Sasquatch in this area but has been kept quiet because the US. Army doesn't want people running all over their base while manouvres are going on at Ft Lewis. I respect that. I have been asked to join them in an outing on base after the training is over. I have received permission from CO to go on base to look for tracks together with a US. Army Ranger Sergeant. He has seen them also. Right now it is closed to the public while training is on.

Fred Bradshaw Thursday, April 11, 2002 2:00 PM"

EDITOR'S COMMENT: I have to say that both Richard and I think it unlikely that such an army 'handbook' has existed for decades without some bright spark nicking one. If any of our readers know better, please write in.

SEED FROM THE SEPULCHRE

At the 2002 Unconvention we met Adam Davies, an intrepid British cryptozoologist and explorer who has done much in recent years to further cryptozoological knowledge. He was lecturing about their expedition in search of the orang pendek – a mysterious hominoid reported from parts of Indonesia. In August this year Ananova, amongst other sources reported how Hans Brunner, a Primatologist and associate of Deakin University in Melbourne, Australia, has been analysing two hairs which were found by Davis and his team in Western Sumatra.

No match could be found when they were tested against reference hairs of orang-utan, chimpanzee, gorilla, sun bear, red leaf monkey, pigtail macaque, Malaysian tapir and human. Dr Brunner still has some checks to run but said:

"So far I have found that the two hairs which I have are different from any species which I have compared them with. If nothing comes which looks like the same I would have to say there could be an animal that we do not yet know about."

The Orang Pendek is said to be a 5ft tall creature with chocolatey-brown or orange hair. It has usually been hypothesised that the creature is an unknown type of bipedal gibbon, but Davies told us privately that early indications were that it may well be more closely related to the orang utan. A digital re-print of the footprint found on the expedition was sent to be analysed by Dr Colin Groves, professor of primatology at University of Canberra, Australia. He has opted not to make his findings public until Mr Brunner releases a scientific paper on the hair analysis but has told Mr Sanderson that he believes it will be "good news"

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WISCONCIN DEATH TRIP

The *Manitowoc Herald Times Reporter* on the eleventh of August told the story of how a Minnesota hunter is wandering northwestern Wisconsin in search of Bigfoot. Armed with a camera and a supply of plaster of Paris, Dennis Murphy, believes he spotted two ageing Bigfoots 30 years ago while searching for a fishing spot, but he kept the sightings to himself for fear of ridicule. Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources officials remain unconvinced that there is a huge, undiscovered mammal stalking the north woods. *"We've not had anyone, to the best of my recollection, claim to have seen Bigfoot,"* said Jim Bishop, public affairs officer for the DNR's northern region. There is a large bear population in the area, he said, and bears can weigh in at more than 500 pounds. *"It could be a bear track,"* Bishop said of footprint evidence collected by Bigfoot hunters. *"A bear track can look very much like a human footprint."* Murphy, who has a plaster of Paris cast of a 17-inch footprint, said it was not made by a bear.

SCHOOL'S OUT 4 SUMMER

This summer Tokoloshe mania gripped southern Africa. There were at least two incidents involving these semi legendary beings which are seen alternately as *bona fide* unknown primates, or as supernatural bogeymen. On the 30th July, while the CFZ Team were chasing giant fish round a lake in

western Lancashire the *Harare Daily News* reported how the headmaster of St Mark's Secondary School in Mhondoro, in Zimbabwe had fled the campus following accusations by parents that he possesses goblins which have sexually harassed female students and teachers. Reporters arriving at the school heard female students and teachers complain of sexual harassment and of being beaten up by "invisible objects".

Most students had by late Wednesday afternoon left the school while the remaining few could be seen milling around, waiting for their parents to come and take them home. Teachers said those affected by the activities of the alleged goblins would behave in a strange manner, characterised by hysteria. *"I witnessed one incident when a student went into a trance,"* said a teacher who refused to be named for fear of victimisation. *"He was demanding meat, threatening that after finishing with the students, the spirits would attack the teachers next. We are living in fear here."*

The mysterious incidents started about six weeks earlier when students complained of being harassed by "mysterious beings" during the night, believed to be goblins, known in Shona as zvikwambo, mubobobo or as tokoloshe in Zulu.

An earlier, but superficially, at least, similar report comes from the *African Eye News Service* (Nelspruit) on July 4, 2002 who told how a girls boarding school in Botswana was forced to seek the church's help after mysterious fires destroyed five buildings and after reports that a tokoloshe (goblin) was harassing the girls. The Zion Christian Church (ZCC) performed an exorcism on Sunday at Tlhalogang Community Junior Secondary School, 40km from Francistown. Botswana's second large city. Girls had complained that an invisible man, or tokoloshe, was caressing their bodies, slapping them or pulling their hair.

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It would probably be churlish to suggest that end of term pranks take place at educational establishments across the world, and that during our mis-spent schooldays most of the CFZ Faculty indulged in such behaviour. We think that one does not necessarily have to hypothesise invisible daemons to explain such things satisfactorily.

Whilst many zoologists, and even some members of the CFZ Faculty itself would suggest that anyone who believes in the existence of an unknown species of higher primate in the woods of the United States *must* be several rizlas short of a spliff, this disturbing tale should be entered into the CFZ record as it may well be the only time a cryptid has been cited as evidence in a court of law.

SASQUATCH TOLD ME TO DO IT...

The San Jose, California, *Mercury News* told on July 30th this year how Cary Stayner, guilty of the murder by decapitation of a nature guide in the world famous Yosemite National Park was fixated with Bigfoot and feared that the world was coming to an end. Stayner often, apparently, visited Foresta, a town on the southwest edge of Yosemite National Park, where he believes he encountered a large, hairy, human-like creature.

Stayner, 40, was sentenced to life in a federal prison without parole after pleading guilty to Armstrong's killing, but state prosecutors want the former motel handyman sentenced to die for the killings of three Yosemite tourists

On July 24, 1999, three days after authorities discovered Armstrong's body, Stayner confessed to killing Armstrong as well as the slaying five months earlier of Eureka residents Carole Sund, 42, her daughter, Juli, 15, and family friend, Silvina Pelosso, 16, of Argentina. His defence was insanity and his belief in bigfoot was cited as one glaring example of his state of mental unrest.

ONE MILLION YEARS B.C

According to the *Charlottetown Guardian* Robert Jones (not his real name), 23, had camped and hiked throughout his life and he had seen animal tracks, he said he had no doubt the one-inch deep tracks in the fresh snow in the Yono National Park in British Columbia belonged to a sasquatch. *"No animal makes that kind of track. It was clearly five-toed. (You could) see the individual toes. I put my shoe? it's size 11 next to it and it was half that still. It looked like a big human foot, about the same size as mini-snowshoes."* For Jones and a co-worker he calls Kelly (not his real name), who was along for the hike, reality and folklore suddenly mixed that late fall day in 2000. They were five kilometres from civilization and panic washed over them in a wave, Jones said.

"There's a sense of fear that comes over you. Kelly's a tough fellow. He grew up being a boxer. He was freaking out and getting all anxious. Kelly grabbed a large stick."

For several minutes they stood in the clear, cold night and listened to the forest. It was unbearably quiet, said Jones. *"You have to understand it's a*

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deafening silence. There's almost too much noise because there's no noise. By this time we were a little freaked out. There was a sense of uneasiness, a sense we were being watched."

Jones, originally from Bedford, N.S., worked as a bellman during the summer and fall for the swanky \$700-a-night Emerald Lake Lodge in Yoho National Park. Kelly, from Vancouver, B.C., had been at the lodge several months before Jones arrived. Just over the Alberta border, B.C.'s 1,310-square-kilometre Yoho butts up against Banff National Park. It would fit into the area between Charlottetown and Summerside from east to west and Cavendish and Tryon from north to south.

Shealy told the Echo that he was disappointed, but not surprised with the decision. *"I think that it's irresponsible ignorance for these government officials not to be able to see the big picture,"* said Shealy *"They don't understand what I am trying to do."* Shealy said that when he sees the amounts of money that the TDC is giving away to various things and he doesn't get it.

"They gave hundreds of thousands of dollar to an Internet company," Shealy told the Echo. *"I think that they just play favorites. They give to their friends. It's the same people that they eat cheeses with at the local hotels."*

SKUNK APE FEVER

The *Everglades Echo* on July the 9th reported the sad tale of how, once again, officialdom seems unwilling to finance any research into cryptozoological matters. David Shealy of Ochopee, had attempted to secure money from the Tourist Development Council for a Skunk Ape Expedition. Jim Coletta, the Chairman of the Collier County Commission responded to Shealy in a letter dated May 31. The letter stated in part: *"Please feel free to work through the appropriate channels to bring your proposal back to the TDC Board if you so chose, but please remain aware that approval for funding by the Tourist Development Council in no way constitutes approval by the Board of County Commissioners. In the past, the Board of County Commissioners has refused to approve the use of Tourist Development Funds for your "expedition", citing that your usage of the funds for capital expenditures was inappropriate"*.

OUT OF PLACE



round up.....

• EASTERN COUGAR.

In the United States there were a spate of puma sightings in the New England state of Connecticut. The Hartford CT *Courant* on September 12, quoted Dale W. May, director of the state Department of Environmental Protection's wildlife division, as saying. *"They are kind of phantoms. A lot of them are misidentified, but there are probably a few cases where someone has probably illegally possessed them."* In Massachusetts, DNA testing of scat found near Quabbin Reservoir in the spring of 1997 confirmed that it came from a cougar. The

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The southern edge of the reservoir is roughly 20 miles north of Somers CT.

Jennifer Rose, the town's animal control officer, has received three unconfirmed sightings, all from the valley of north Somers. One woman told Rose she saw a mountain lion near her property on Labour Day and then again four days later. This Monday, a resident Rose declined to name told her he saw a mountain lion while driving home in the evening. Rose took casts of prints from the vicinity of the sightings and has contacted DEP. May said his agency routinely hears from people who say they have seen a mountain lion, although he said the proximity of the sightings in Somers makes this series "more unique than most sightings." But Rose said that from her perspective as an animal control officer, she is unconcerned about how a mountain lion, if one is roaming around, found its way to town. *"If it's here, it's here,"* she said. *"I would just like to be able to confirm if it's true or not, if we have one or not."*

OOP ALLIGATOR

The *Minneapolis Star Tribune* on July 19th 2002 caused a glimmer of excitement at CFZ mansions when it ran the headline "Gator may lurk in Plymouth lake". However we were dissappointed to discover that the Plymouth in question was not the Devon city some forty miles from our home but a town in Minnesota. *"We're not saying to avoid the lake, just to use common sense,"* said Plymouth police Sgt. Chris Kuklok.

"Keep your children in sight and if you see it, call 911. Even if it is true -- which we are not sure if it is yet -- it is probably someone's pet that got loose or became too large, so they let it loose."

GRAVEYARD MONKEY

In Romania, according to Ananova on th 21 September a Japanese macaque which escaped from a Romanian zoo comes back each night to visit his family. Miki, spends his days in a nearby cemetery but goes back to his old cage at night. He left his mate and a young baby behind when he escaped from the zoo at Tirgu Mures. Zoo manager Berecki Maltazar says keepers will try to catch Miki during one of his evening visits. The graveyard caretakers say Miki is not aggressive.

Other out of place monkeys were reported in Florida where according to a story published in the *Sentinal* on 9th June a pair of Rhesus monkeys had been seen along the Wekewa river. It is thought that they were the descendants of animals released there in the 1930s.

• DIRE RHEA

A runaway rhea has returned to its rural roost near Forfar-after becoming homesick, said Scottish newspapers on the 12th September. Stretch, the rhea, was found itching to get back into the enclosure where three of his mates had been pining for him to return. Stretch had run away from his home at Kookaburra's restaurant at Foresterseat on the outskirts of Forfar, jumping a six-foot fence in a flap after being spooked by a combine harvester. He was later spotted by disbelieving golfers on the Cunninghamhill course. Attempts to catch him were unsuccessful and fears for Stretch's safety grew after sightings dried up. Kookaburra's proprietor Darren Hill said, *"We were really worried that he had been caught by poachers or hit by a lorry or something."*

But the rhea stunned Mr Hill and partner Susan Roberts when he sauntered into a field close to

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the restaurant, and stood outside the pen, rubbing beaks with the other birds inside. He has paired off with Maria, another of the rheas who are all 18-months old. *"Without a doubt he has missed the other rheas, but I think he has missed his girl friend most,"* Mr Hill added.

Another out of place ratite was reported to us by Dave McMann on the 10th July. He sent us an unreferenced story about an Ostrich in Norway. Annie and Hallvard Aasen say the giant African bird jumped out of the forest as they drove in the Nord Trondelag region. They say they tried to take a picture of the bird, but were too late and it disappeared back into the trees. Officials say no one has reported losing an ostrich and there are no ostrich farms in the region.

• ARCTIC SEAL IN JAPAN

Ananova noted on the 15th August that a bearded seal – an Arctic species - has found an unlikely home in the murky waters of a Tokyo river. The seal has been named Tama-chan, after the Tamagawa river, where he was spotted about six miles upstream of Tokyo Bay. *"This species normally lives on the Arctic periphery, even further north than the Okhotsk Sea,"* said Katsutoshi Arai, a seal expert at Kamogawa Seaworld. So far, there have been no reports of missing seals from local aquariums, leading experts to believe that Tama-chan is an intrepid, if slightly displaced, wanderer.

• BEE EATERS BREED

On the 15th June Ananova announced that a pair of bee-eaters have been spotted going through their courtship displays at Bishop Middleham in County Durham. The Durham Wildlife Trust has appointed a warden and

police are on alert for egg collectors. This is the first time these birds have been reported breeding in the UK for fifty years.

• IT MUST HAVE BEEN A EWE

Deer hunter Fergie McDonald found a stranded sheep 10ft up a tree at Ardnamurchan near Fort William. He was walking underneath when he heard it high up in the branches. He returned with friends and rescued the animal, he said: *"It must have been a pretty persuasive sheepdog rounding this one up."*

• NOW ANOTHER ST LEONARD'S HAS A DRAGON

The dragon of St Leonard's Forest in Sussex is well known in cryptozoological circles. Its northern namesake in Lincolnshire must have got jealous, because according to Ananova in early September Holidaymakers at Chapel St Leonards in Lincs, were surprised to see a Savannah Monitor, some thirty inches long sunning itself on the seafront.

RSPCA officer Justin Stubbs, who took the lizard to a specialist carer, said: *"Savannah monitors can give a nasty bite and we certainly wouldn't have wanted one loose in a busy holiday resort for too long".*

• SPAWN AGAIN

Ananova on 18th June reported thousands of *"giant frogs are plaguing residents and motorists in north Germany"*. A plague of North American bullfrogs caused when a pet owner released a few frogs in a local river has been causing havoc.

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They have been free from natural predators and have been allowed to breed in large numbers. Many locals are too scared to venture outside, despite reassurances the animals are harmless to humans.

• GRIM OOP T'NORTH

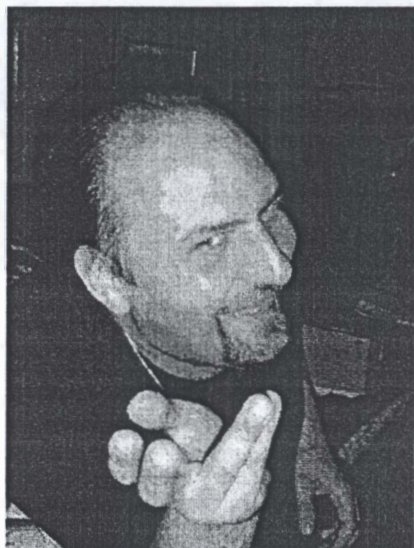
On the 21st August *The Yorkshire Post* announced that, the place Senor Freeman refers to as God's Own Country, had acquired a strange new batch of residents – several thousand Amazonian freshwater jellyfish which have been found in a former sand quarry turned nature reserve in South Yorkshire. The jellyfish were first noticed by a local angler at Doncaster's Hatfield Marina when he spotted 27 of the tiny, two cm wide, transparent freshwater jellyfish swimming around the edges of the northern end of the lake. Two weeks later, another man and his 12-year-old daughter noticed the number had increased to thousands and contacted Doncaster Museum with their observations. Over the years the creatures, which are harmless and known as Regent's Park jellyfish after first being discovered in the park's Botanical Gardens, have been seen at various locations around the country, but how they have ended up in Doncaster is a bit of a puzzle.

• ON THE ROAD AGAIN

According to Reuters on September 8th detectives are investigating the mystery of a hamster found driving a toy racing car along a promenade at a northern seaside resort. The hamster, nicknamed Speedy, was handed in by a member of the public who found him cruising through Cleveleys, near Blackpool in the modified toy, which he powered by a treadmill. *"It is a model hotrod racing car with large wheels at the back and small*

ones at the front," the Daily Express quoted Constable Quentin Allen as saying.

And finally Richard.....

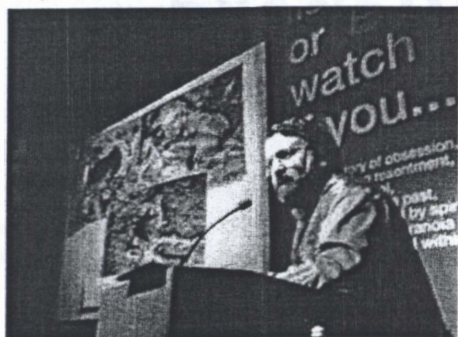


Orange Today on the 6th August told the heartwarming story of A man sleeping on a beach who ended up with a barnacle stuck to his penis. The 23-year-old had been lying in shallow water to escape the heat in Bor, Yugoslavia.

He had to go to the accident and emergency department of the local hospital after being unable to get rid of the crustacean himself. Hospital sources say a nurse initially failed to remove it with tweezers. Daily newspaper *Glas avnosti* reports medics only managed to free the barnacle when the embarrassed man got an unplanned erection.

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OBITUARY: Peter Chapple 1954-2002



by Loren Coleman

compiled a large data-base on the subject of unidentified animals. One of ARFRA's main achievements involved a 1980s study of panther reports in the Dandenong Ranges. Through a detailed analysis of information gathered over many years, Chapple and other researchers were able to predict the appearance of particular panthers in places where they had been seen in the past. This led to several close encounters with them and proved that the "Big Cat" phenomenon could be measured scientifically.

Peter Chapple devoted the last 18 years of his life to researching Victoria's Big Cat and mainland Thylacine incidents, and he had become a major figure in Australian cryptozoology. He traveled to Fortean Times' London conferences to give lectures on "Australian Thylacines, Big Cats and Devils," in 2000, and on further Australian cryptozoology at "Myths and Monsters 2001."

Mike Cleeland, the immediate past secretary of ARFRA has noted: *"Peter's rare qualities of inspiration, ability, and persistence resulted in the assembly of a loyal band of colleagues at ARFRA who will be determined to ensure that his work will be continued."*

In recent years, Chapple was concentrating on working towards his Masters of Science at Monash University, analyzing patterns of distribution of recent Thylacine sightings.

Peter Chapple was a multi-talented achiever, having been a former runner-up in the South Australian Open Tennis Championship, and a well known singer and musician.

Between 1985 and 1993, when Peter Chapple was entering eisteddfods, he won 38 events, and was placed in 57 others. Also in 1985, he was signed up with the Victoria State Opera. His first album, *Whatever You Believe*, was chosen as Album of the Week on radio 3MP in 1993. This

Peter Chapple, 48, well-known Australian cryptozoologist, died suddenly, on August 26, 2002 (local Australian time) at Dandenong Hospital, after suffering a heart attack.

Peter Chapple was the President of the Australian Rare Fauna Research Association (ARFRA), in Emerald, Victoria, Australia, which recorded more than 2000 sightings of the Thylacine in Victoria alone. ARFRA was founded by Chapple in June, 1984, under the name "Rare Fauna and Phenomena Research," after he had an encounter that year with a "Big Cat" (cryptid panther) in the forest in the Dandenongs. The group became an incorporated association in 1993.

Under Chapple's leadership, ARFRA conducted extensive field-studies and

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was followed in successive years by One Voice, The Impossible Dream, and in 1996 by Peter Chapple Live.

Chapple represented Australia at the Fifteenth International April Spring Music Festival in North Korea in April, 1997, and was placed first against extensive international competition. He also was a Principal Singing Teacher at the Australian Talent School in Ferntree Gully.

Long before he reached school age, Peter Chapple found singing as natural as breathing, and already earned applause - from two girls he sang to across the road. At nine, he made his first public appearance, at a church concert. However, his early potential went unrecognized, and he worked alone on improving and perfecting his voice as best he could, by listening to tapes of himself and comparing them with recordings of the great singers.

It was not until he was 28 years old that his singing career really began. At that time, with his career as a tennis coach ended by a serious back injury, he took up landscape painting, and revived his earlier interest in song writing - mostly folk, Country & Western and soft rock. It was when he took tapes of his songs to his art teacher, seeking an assessment of his songs from her opera singer husband, that his chance came. It was the voice, rather than the songs, that attracted attention.

The singer, George King, provided him with lessons (gratis), opportunities to perform in public, and encouragement to audition for music theatre, where he played a number of principal roles. It was at this time also that he began entering eisteddfods.

As noted above, Peter Chapple was the President of the Australian Rare Fauna

Research Association, and enjoyed bush activities, golf, cricket, and, according to those that knew him dearly, watching his beloved St. Kilda blow their chances at the footy each year. With his inspiration, his beloved teacher-singer wife Rosemary, he lived at Clematis in company with two sheep - Sop(rano), and Sop's quite unexpected offspring, Alto.

Peter Chapple's song-filled life and good spirit will be missed in the world of cryptozoology in Australia and worldwide.

PETER CHAPPLE

I was lucky enough to meet Peter Chapple on two occasions. Firstly after his talk on Australian cryptids at the Unconvention and secondly when he travelled to Exeter to give a talk at the CFZ HQ with his wife Rose, and his father.

He was witty, charming, and a snappy dresser to boot. As a zoologist myself I am quite good at spotting people who fabricate stories. I have spent hours talking to Peter about his encounters and I am totally convinced of his veracity. Peter was a first class zoologist with a knowledge of the Thylacine second to none. Peter saw thylacines a total of four times in the state of Victoria. His accounts are amongst the most persuasive ever, one could hardly wish for a better witness.

His lecture for the CFZ was an extended and more indepth version of the one he did for the Uncon. Few people could talk for three hours and keep the lecture constantly fascinating, but Peter did. We will remember this fine gentleman as the thylacine's greatest champion.

RICHARD FREEMAN

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ENTER THE DRAGON: THE MONSTER OF TIANCHI LAKE

In late July this year reports filtered through to the west of a mass lake monster sighting in Tianchi Lake, a deep volcanic lake in north east China. 500, yes 500 people were said to have seen the creature leaping from the water. Some from a distance of only 30 feet. If the stories were accurate then this was the biggest mass sighting of a cryptid in history. No film or photos accompanied the stories, which raised suspicions (did no-one among the 500 tourists have a camera?) To find out more I contacted Dr Yvonne Sadovy at Hong Kong university. Her colleague Rachel Wong kindly e-mailed the following reports from Chinese newspapers.

Sightings of Nessie-like `monster' increase

South China Morning Post
Hong Kong
Aug 1, 2002

Claimed sightings of a mythical creature dubbed China's Loch Ness monster have stirred interest in a volcanic lake in Jilin province.

"It is true that many tourists and a photographer had seen the monster on different occasions in the lake," said Meng Fanying, director of the Changbaishan Nature Reserve, referring to recent sightings at the 373 m deep Tianchi Lake in northeast China.

"Its head looks like a horse and the body like a turtle," the tourism official added.

The two latest sightings were on the night of July 6 and the afternoon of July 25, China Daily reported yesterday. According to witnesses, the monster surfaced once for 10 minutes.

The newspaper quoted Mr Meng as saying the Chinese Loch Ness monster appeared just 10 metres from the bank and looked like a giant seal.

A local tourism official in the Tianchi Lake area claimed that TV and newspaper reporters have filmed or witnessed the monster's movement on one occasion.

The paper cited legends that the monster had been around for about 100 years. But it said scientists were sceptical.

The legend has spawned the Tianchi Monster Society, and a model of the monster is on display at the Changbai Mountain Natural History Museum.

Lake 'monster' jumps back to sight

China Daily

The "Monster of Tianchi Lake" in the Changbai Mountains in Jilin Province, Northeast China, is back in the news after several recent sightings were reported. It was spotted twice by hundreds of people in different parts of the lake, according to Meng Fanying, director of a Songjiang District Tourism Bureau. Meng said the monster, which seems to be black in colour, was 10 metres from the bank during the most recent sighting, and jumped out of the water from time to time like a seal. *"That lasted for about 10 minutes, and 200-some sightseers on Changbai's western peak said they saw it,"* he said.

Although no one really got a clear look at the mysterious creature that afternoon, Xue Junlin, a local photographer, claimed that it looked just like the Tianchi Lake monster on display at the Changbai Mountain Natural History Museum.

"They both have horse-like heads," explained Xue. He and another local man, Liu Bo, are the only two people to have seen the monster previously.

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The 9.8-square-kilometre Tianchi Lake is 373 metres deep in its deepest part and is China's deepest volcanic lake. The legend of some sort of monster has been around for more than a hundred years.

Scientists have dismissed it as pure fiction not least of all because of volcanic eruptions, the last of which was 300 years ago. But the reports of sightings have never died out.

In fact, some of the more interested local people have organized the Tianchi Monster Society and persist in their attempts to trace the animal as true believers.

China: Monster seen in man-made Lake in Jilin Province

BBC Monitoring Asia Pacific - Political
London
Sep 8, 1999

Text of report in English by official Chinese news agency Xinhua (New China News Agency) Changchun, 8th September: An animal like Scotland's Loch Ness monster was sighted recently in Songhua Lake in China's Jilin province, causing people who were swimming there to leave the water.

The man-made lake, 200 km in length, is on the Songhua River. There have been reports of a monster since the 1950s, although no one has ever seen it up close. One eyewitness spotted it swimming or drifting on hot days, but it never put its head out of the water.

A swimsuit seller said that he had seen it on eight occasions since mid-July and described it as a black-skinned object two metres wide and eighty or ninety metres long. On the morning of 19th August it was seen on the surface for nearly two minutes. The swimsuit seller took some photos of it but it appeared as a blurred spot because of the distance. One speedboat driver reported seeing a large, black thing moving fast towards him and he got so scared that he fled.

China's most famous lake monster is said to be in

Tianchi, or Heavenly Lake, in Jilin Province, but many scientists say they are sceptical about it.

LAKE MONSTER SEEN IN NORTHEASTERN CHINA

Bernama

Print Media Subtitle: *Malaysian National News Agency*
Kuala Lumpur
Sep 8, 1999

CHANGCHUN, Sept 8 (Bernama-Xinhua) - An animal like Scotland's Loch Ness monster was sighted recently in Songhua Lake in China's Jilin province, causing people who were swimming there to leave the water.

The man-made lake, 200 k.m. in length, is on the Songhua River. There have been reports of a monster since the 1950s, although no one has ever seen it up close. One eye-witness spotted it swimming or drifting on hot days, but it never put its head out of the water.

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One speed boat driver reported seeing a large, black thing moving fast towards him and he got so scared that he fled. China's most famous lake monster is said to be in Tianchi, or Heavenly lake, in Jilin Province, but many scientists say they are skeptical about it.

Tianchi Lake shares legacy with Ness

China Daily

CHANGCHUN (Xinhua) -- A Chinese scholar says the monsters that have been reported several times in Tianchi Lake in China's Jilin Province are recorded far back in Chinese history. Gong Yuhai, 69, who studies early Chinese culture, says that the Shanhaijing, a collection of fairy tales, contains many accounts of turtle-shaped animals.

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with a pig's head and black skin, which are quite similar to monsters in the Changbai Mountains, where the lake is located. Some people have said the monsters have huge bodies, about 20-30 metres wide, and small heads and tails, and there are similar stories in provincial chronicles.

Britain, Japan, the United States, Canada and Columbia have also reported sightings of monsters in lakes, and Gong says he believes these are species similar to what are recorded in Chinese history. A great deal of work has been done to try to capture these monsters, but to no avail. Gong believes the monsters have hideouts in mountains, with tunnels leading to lakes nearby.

"To keep their caves clean, they usually go to lakes to relieve themselves at night," he explained, adding that faeces left by strange animals have been found near Tianchi Lake. To feed their bulky bodies, the monsters always look for food and eat fish, small animals, grass and trees, Gong says, but birds are their favourite food, and these giants have enough strength to suck down birds flying several metres above them.

TV probes mystery of 'lake monsters'

China Daily

CHANGCHUN (Xinhua) -- A TV documentary delving into the mystery of the monsters at Tianchi Lake in the Changbai Mountains has been completed and was shown in the city of Yanji, Jilin Province.

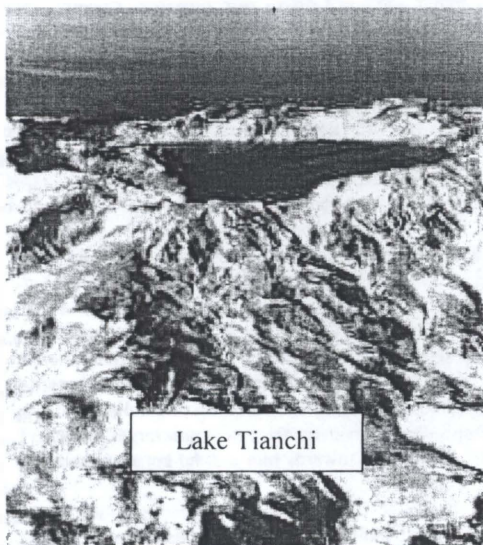
The 40-minute programme was filmed jointly during the past two years by the Jilin Society of the Monsters at Tianchi Lake in the Changbai Mountains and the Huichun TV Station. Chai Jingguo, chairman of the society, said that the documentary will help solve one of the great mysteries of the world. Tianchi, occupying 10 square kilometres with a depth of 373 metres, is a crater lake on the top of the Changbai Mountains, which border China and the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. For years, people have been fascinated by the possible existence of creatures in the lake.

Although many people still deny they're there,

records from the early part of this century show that thousands of mountain climbers claim to have seen them. The documentary is based in part on interviews with supposed eyewitnesses who say that the monsters are for real. It also includes photos and videotape footage that purportedly show the lake monsters. This film was shot from a vantage on a mountaintop more than 1,000 metres above the lake, and the creatures can be identified only as black spots.

Witnesses say the monsters come in many different shapes and sizes. Some said they resemble dinosaurs; others said they're more like buffalo. Some said that they have round black heads, and others said that their necks are elongated. More than 20 of the photos used in the documentary are from Zhou Wenjie, a professor of the physics department of Jilin University, who took them on July 24, 1994. A key eyewitness -- Zhou Wenying, who works for the Jilin Meteorological Department -- said that he has seen the creatures seven or eight times.

A big thanks to Dr Sadovy, Ms Wong and Hong Kong University for all their help. Hopefully more information will be forthcoming on what looks as if it could be *the* most important encounter with a modern day dragon.. RICHARD FREEMAN



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TEXAS WILD WOMEN

By Nick Redfern

When I told Jon that, for this column, I was planning on writing a piece about the wild women of Texas, he exhibited what was positively uncontrolled enthusiasm and excitement and almost salivated down the telephone. I suspect, however, that this was because he was expecting an article on all things blonde and busty. I explained to him that he should calm down and take a pill as he had got it slightly wrong. The wild women that I was talking about were quite different. As I told Jon, since hooking up with people in the cryptozoological community here in sunny Texas, I have heard a number of tales of what I can only describe as "feral women" living in some of the more remote and forested areas of Texas. I am hot on the pursuit of many of these tales and hope to prepare a full report at some point in the near future. Needless to say, the bulk of these tales have never been aired publicly. As a taster of what is to come, however, I thought I would share with you the two, following cases.

In his book *Of Wolves and Men*, the author Barry Lopez described an incident involving a "wolf girl" that occurred in the early part of the nineteenth century, at the Devil's River near Del Rio, south-west Texas. So the story goes, the girl's mother did not survive her birth, and John Dent, the father, died during a thunderstorm as he was riding for help after his daughter was born. *"The child was never found, and the presumption was that she had been eaten by wolves near the Dents' isolated cabin,"* added Lopez.

The story, however, does not end there. Lopez additionally recorded that a boy living at San Felipe Springs in 1845 had seen several wolves and "a creature, with long hair covering its features, that looked like a naked girl," that were in the process of attacking a herd of goats. Further, similar reports surfaced over the course of the following twelve months and Apache Indians in the area also asserted that they had found what appeared to be the footprints of a child among those of the local wolf population. Was this the child that many thought had fallen prey to a wolf pack?

A hunt was duly launched, and on the third day the girl was sighted and cornered in a canyon. The legend was true. She was not alone, however. Indeed, the girl was, quite literally, in the company of wolves – one of which was shot after it attacked the hunters. The girl was subsequently captured and taken to a nearby ranch, where she was locked in a room. But matters would escalate after sundown. As night fell, a large wolf pack that had heard the girl's eerie howling closed in on the ranch and surrounded it. Needless to say, the farm animals became terrified and as a result of the mayhem that erupted, the girl was able to flee from the ranch and was reunited with her four-legged friends. For seven years, the girl vanished, seemingly into oblivion. However, Lopez stated that in 1852, a surveying crew that was exploring

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A new route to El Paso caught sight of her on a sand bar on the Rio Grande. "*She was with two pups. After that, she was never seen again,*" said Lopez.

An equally intriguing tale can be found in *Legends of Texas*, published by the Texas Folklore Society and edited by J. Frank Dobie in 1924. The story commences with an account of strange "*barefoot tracks of two human beings*" that had frequently been found in the settlements of the lower Navidad in 1837. The tracks were relatively small and were thought by the witnesses to have been made by a boy and "*a girl or woman of delicate feet.*" Guard dogs on local ranches and properties would on occasion react in a furious fashion when the mysterious visitors were believed to be prowling the area late at night and in the early hours of the morning. And there were reports of the pair even breaking into people's homes and stealing food.

According to legend, a human skeleton was later discovered that led some to believe the wild woman's larger male companion had died. What happened to the skeleton – if indeed it ever really existed – is unknown. An initial attempt by a group of men in the area to hunt the wild woman down failed; however, on the second occasion...

It was a dark night and a shadowy form loomed into view. Whatever it was, the unidentified visitor was slim and unclothed, but was curiously described as having a body covered in "short brown hair." The men tried to forcefully grab her but once again she bounded out of the area with astonishing speed. The puzzle would remain unresolved for years until a group of men allegedly "*cornered a runaway male slave*" in the same area. This was to satisfy local newspapers that the wild woman of the Navidad was nothing of the sort; and was, in reality, an unfortunate

slave who had escaped from his masters and had been living wild for who knows how long.

Given the fact that not everyone was convinced that the wild woman and the slave were one and the same, another attempt was initiated to try and resolve the mystery once and for all. A team of hunters decided that what was necessary was a complete check of the nearby woods. After several fruitless searches, the team hit the jackpot when one of them reported seeing the wild woman running along an adjacent prairie. Men with lassos pursued the woman while others with dogs ensured that she could not make her escape into the dense woodland. Again, the woman outwitted the hunters; but at sundown that situation was to radically change. It was a moonlit night and the excitement of the previous several hours was beginning to subside when the hounds became agitated, and which signaled the presence of, well, *something*. Not only that, the *something* was crashing through the bushes in the direction of the hunters! It was the wild woman. She again bounded across the prairie and again attempted to head towards the thick forest.

Whatever the wild woman was, however, she was no normal human being. The nearest hunter reported that his horse was so afraid of the woman that it refused to go near her. And the fact that she was by this time running as fast as the most agile deer didn't exactly help the situation either.

By this time, the wild woman was coming perilously close to the forest and the lead hunter realized that it was literally a case of now or never. He spurred his horse on and threw his lasso. It missed its target and the woman made good her escape into the dense and darkened forest. Although the attempted capture of the Navidad wild woman had ended in failure, one important point should be noted. The hunter had an excellent opportunity to note the appearance

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of the woman as they both charged across the prairie. Like others before him, the hunter (who was able to get a good look at her) described her as naked, with wild eyes and covered in short brown hair.

Interestingly, it was further reported that the woman was allegedly carrying something in her hand. Later, a five-foot long, carefully fashioned club would be found in the area.

Was this, like the girl seen at the Devil's River, some form of feral person? Or does the account have more in common with America's most famous – or infamous – monster: Bigfoot?

Or can the whole saga be relegated to the world of legend and modern day mythology? The jury is still out. Meanwhile, I'll continue to pursue with much enthusiasm the wild women of Texas. It's a tough old life, isn't it?

The Centre for Fortean Zoology now has a permanent American Office. Now that the nomadic Redfern family have finally got a permanent address, so have we. Nick is trying to establish a state by state network of regional representatives similar to the county by county one we have in the UK. All offers of assistance, money or gratis Ramones bootlegs to:

Cfz (USA)
3313 Avenue D, Nederland,
Texas 77627,
USA
e-mail skywatcher4u@aol.com

creature feature

THE CFZ INVESTIGATES



catfish rising

The biggest freshwater fish in
England?

In 26 of *Animals & Men* we ran the following story:

On Valentine's Day the Liverpool Echo announced that the manager of the Martin Mere nature reserve in West Lancashire is convinced there is something large lurking in the deeps. Some creature, say staff at the reserve, is responsible for dragging fully grown swans into one of their lakes.

Several visitors witnessed the swan trying to flee the grasp of a giant underwater predator. In an earlier incident, the 20-acre lake where swans gather was left deserted as they all refused to go on to the water.

"Something is completely spooking them," commented reserve manager Chris Tomlinson.

"On two occasions, both Thursdays, January 17 and February 7, something in the water has caused the 1,500-plus wild wintering swans to completely disappear".

Centre manager Pat Wisniewski adds: *"Whatever it was out there last night must have been pretty big to pull a swan back into the water. Swans weigh up to 13 kilos".* Pat added:

"This could be an extremely large pike, or

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Wels catfish. Both conceivably could survive in the rather murky, de-oxygenated water for years and grow to an extremely large size"

Four years ago Pat spotted something that appeared to be the size of a small car circling the mere just below the waterline of the lake, which is four metres deep. One theory is that something may have made its way into the mere through its drainage system many years ago as a juvenile and remained there ever since having grown too large to escape.



The sector of Martin Mere where the big fish was seen

As part of our "Big Fish Project", (launched in issue 22), we decided that it would be foolish for us not to investigate this monster to the best of our ability, and so, as the first act of the CFZ under her new guise as an official non-profit making trust, Richard and Jon spent a week in west Lancashire at the end of May investigating the background to these attacks.

What we found was beyond our wildest dreams. Even before our meeting with Pat on the Jubilee Bank Holiday we discovered that Martin Mere had a rich and glorious history of high strangeness which was almost unparalleled in our experience. We unearthed stories of dragons (the town of Ormskirk had

to have got its name somewhere), merfolk, marsh spirits and a panoply of strange monsters. We even discovered some *bona fide* biological anomalies which had hitherto escaped our notice.

When we met Pat, it was like meeting a kindred spirit. Within we realised that we had definitely fallen on our feet. During the course of our conversation over the next hour, which took place in his wood panelled office which overlooked the vista of the nature reserve, it turned out that Pat was not only sympathetic to our cause, but that he was a devotee of the work of Bernard Heuvelmans. He was also (like Richard and me), a keeper of exotic reptiles, and he even came from Richard's home-town of Nuneaton.

He told us about a number of incidents where birds had apparently been attacked by an unknown creature. Was it, as he had been quoted as claiming, *really* the size of a car?

"It was obviously nothing of the sort" he smiled, and gestured towards the sofa that Richard was sitting on. "It was about that big - or maybe a little bigger" he laughed. "The trouble is that the story came out in the newspapers the weekend before half term, and I'm sure that the people who covered the story considered that we were doing some sort of a publicity stunt to get more visitors over the holiday...they were never going to take the story seriously".

This explained the hyperbole. The sofa that Pat had compared the creature he had seen to was about six and a half feet long. We might not be looking at a wels as big as the sixteen footer that was caught in the Danube during the nineteenth century, but we were still talking about a fish far bigger than any other of this species ever caught in the United Kingdom. Pat, too, thought that it was probably a wels. "They have been caught around here" he told us. Apparently one of the angling clubs in Southport had caught a couple

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of small wels in recent years in a pond in the district. There was no doubt, therefore, that there were *some* wels in the district. But could one have grown to a length of seven or eight feet in Martin Mere?

Pat believes that it could. After all there are certainly quite large fish in the lake. Indeed for a lake that has only existed for three decades, and which is only fed through a narrow sluice pipe, there is a surprising diversity of fish fauna. There were bream, roach, tench, pike and some extremely large carp as well as smaller species like sticklebacks. There are even gudgeon - a species usually only found in well oxygenated, relatively fast running water - and the odd goldfish which have appeared from God knows where.

Possibly the most exciting piece of news was that Pat was not the only witness to the monstrous fish. Various volunteers from the wildfowl reserve had reported seeing something large in the lake over the years.

Now it came to the crunch. We outlined our plan of action to Pat and Chris.

1. Using an echo sounder mounted in a two man rubber dinghy, produce a contour map of the floor of the lake. We had been told that there were two or three deep trenches some three metres in depth, and that the rest of the lake was fairly shallow. Chris told us that these trenches were in fact where the 1972 lake had been excavated with a JCB. Somewhere, he told us, he had some photographs of the excavations taking place. He would do his best to dig them out for us.

2. Divide the lake into three metre transects using ropes.

3. Using a sonar fish finder, search each transect in turn for sonar traces of the fish.

4. If we received such sonar traces to attempt to bait the fish to the surface using a hessian sack full of fish heads and offal. If we were successful to photograph the fish in order to produce a definitive identification. We assured them that we had no intention of harming the creature - if by some means it was possible to pull it ashore in order to measure and weigh it, that would be an added bonus, but the idea was always to release the fish back into the Mere. Pat nodded his agreement. He was a great believer in natural predation, he told us. If there is a giant wels in the Mere and it eats a few swans now and again then so be it. I, for one was so impressed by his Zen attitude to the whole affair that I would have hugged him if it wouldn't have been an appallingly *infra dig* thing to do.

So, we asked. Would they let us carry this programme out?

There was silence for what seemed like hours but was actually only a few seconds.

"Yeah, why not?" said Pat. "*It sounds like fun*". There were, of course, a few technical requirements vis a vis my public liability insurance, and the health and safety officers of the WWT, but in principle at least, we could go ahead. We could quite probably even camp on site, which was something that we hadn't even dared to ask until now. We decided that a projected time for our return would be at the end of July. Pat said that he would prefer if we did our work actually *on* the lake after the public had left. However we could spend the daytimes exploring the waterways that crisscrossed the marshes, and scrutinising the surface of the water for any sign of the mysterious creature that we were all convinced was lurking down there somewhere.

Truly, now the game was afoot, and to all intents and purposes the first part of our investigation was over.

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In July, we returned. This time we were a four man expedition, consisting of Jonathan Downes, Richard Freeman, Graham Inglis and John Fuller. Over five days at the end of the month we carried out extensive mapping of the lake and even used specialist sonar tracking equipment.

FROM RICHARD'S LOG:

At around nine in the evening on the first night I was walking between a lakeside house and the swan hide when I saw a portion of the back of a large fish that appeared to be basking in the shallows. It was an oily black in colour and bore a dorsal crest. The visible portion was around a foot in length, six inches wide, and stood about four inches out of the water. The creature dived swiftly, alarmed by my presence. I flung bait into the water and the creature's back surfaced once more briefly. It then disappeared. Gauging the size of the animal was hard as only a small area of its back was visible but judging by the disturbance it caused it must have been substantial.

The following day at approximately 11 am I was in the same area when I saw a large disturbance in the water. This time the fish did not break the surface but it formed an "s" shaped disturbance over three feet long. the commotion was greater than that of the previous sighting. It was either three or more fish swimming single file or one large elongate fish. Baiting

failed to make the creature re-appear.

On the third day we also made a number of large and significant sonar contacts with the fish, and although we did not see the creature again we amassed enough information over a period of five days to not only get a satisfactory description of the fish, but some idea of its habits and also a provisional but fairly solid identification. It was a Wels catfish (*Silurus glanis*)

The wels, sheetfish or European catfish (*Silurus glanis*) is indigenous to continental Europe east of the river Rhine; it appears to be particularly common in eastern Europe, especially in the basin of the river Danube. It has a slimy, scaleless, elongated body and a broad, flat head with a wide mouth. Writing in *Naturalised Animals of the British Isles* Sir Christopher Lever notes that it has a "distinctly sinister appearance". He goes on to describe the creature in some depth:

"The head, back and sides are usually some shade of greenish-black spotted with olive-green, and the underside is yellowy-white, with an indistinct blackish marbling; the head and back may sometimes be a deep velvety black and the sides occasionally take on a bronzy sheen. Two long barbels depending from the upper jaw, and four short ones from the lower jaw, help to give the catfish its name.

There is no adipose fin, but an enormously elongated anal fin: a tiny dorsal fin is situated half-way between the bases of the pectoral and pelvic fins. The largest authenticated wels, taken from the river Dnieper in the Ukraine in the southern U.S.S.R., measured over 16 ft (5 m) in length and weighed 675 lb (306 kg); elsewhere in Europe and in England, however, the wels seldom exceeds 5 ft (152 cm) in length and 25 lb (11 kg) in weight."

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The wels is a solitary fish. It lives mostly in the still, deoxygenated waters of lakes, marshes and lagoons, but can also be found in the lower reaches and backwaters of slow-flowing rivers. Unusually for a catfish it is tolerant of both heavy industrial pollution and salt water and is found naturally in the brackish water of certain parts of the Black and Baltic Seas. Wels are nocturnal, choosing to feed after dark. They are voracious predators, especially when adults. Lever lists prey species as including: *"turbot, bream, crayfish, eels, frogs, roach, tench, ducklings, goslings and occasionally water-voles."*

They have even been reported as man-eaters. Lever cites an authority called Valenciennes (presumably the eminent 19th Century Ichthyologist) as saying: *"In the year 1700, on the 3rd of July, a countryman took one near Thorn for Torun, Poland] which had the entire body of an infant in its stomach'.* Lever also quotes someone called Grossinger (whom I have been unable to identify further) as saying that a Hungarian fisherman discovered the corpse of a woman in another *'having a marriage ring on her finger and a purse full of money at her girdle'.*

The name 'sheetfish', by the way, has been cited as being a corruption of "Shit-fish" implying that this voracious predator, which has also been described as a piscine vacuum cleaner, will eat absolutely everything including human waste.

The wels usually spends the winter in a state of semi-hibernation, and emerges to spawn between May and July when the water has reached a minimum temperature of 68°F (20°C). Lever describes how:

"The male scrapes a shallow hollow in the mud amidst thick vegetation close to the shore in which the female deposits about 15000 eggs

per 1 lb (453 gm) of body-weight; these adhere to the vegetation which lines the nest, where they are guarded by the male until the young emerge after about three weeks."

In the eastern parts of its European range, especially in the vicinity of the Azov Sea on the borders of Russia and the Ukraine, the Caspian Sea, in Lake Aral (The Aral Sea) on the borders between Uzbekistan and Kazakhstan, and in those countries on either side of the river Danube, the wels is important economically. In eastern Europe it is stocked in a considerable number of commercial fish-farms (especially in Hungary) where its scaleless skin is employed in the production of glue and leather, and its eggs are sometimes used to "pad out" the more expensive eggs of the beluga sturgeon to produce an inferior type of caviar.

It was presumably this economic importance that inspired a succession of attempts to naturalise wels into British waters.

During the course of our investigations into, what we jokingly dubbed "Marty", not believing for one moment that anyone would take us seriously, we unearthed a significant volume of evidence to suggest that "Marty" was not only the largest freshwater fish in contemporary England, but he was quite possibly the oldest, and may have been introduced into Lancashire waters in the 1870s by none other than Frank Buckland of the Acclimatisation Society.

The full story of our adventures, and the entire body of evidence that we collected can be found in a new book *The Monster of The Mere* by Jonathan Downes. It is available for £14.99/\$US22 (inclusive of p&p) from CFZ Publications c/o the editorial address. It is lavishly illustrated and we are taking orders for it now

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BUNNYMAN MAN, MYTH OR MONSTER?

by Neil Arnold

When darkness falls on a railroad overpass in the vicinity of Fairfax Station, Virginia, a legend wakes and stirs the subconscious. The thickets and foliage around Colchester Road come alive with overblown yarns and twisted tales so bizarre and yet sinister, that whatever lurks within the eerie shadows exists in a void that straddles a fine line between urban myth and zooforn phenomenon, a term coined to describe strange creatures which somehow haunt this planet yet seem to fade into some other twilight zone, displaying supernatural qualities.

Since the 1970's a figure known as Bunnyman has haunted the area, sharing the Maryland woodlands and Columbia District back roads with Goatman, Bigfoot and other local legends. There are many similarities between Bunnyman and Goatman, mainly in the fact that they exist without any real solidity to their character, but they prowl with potency like some campfire story, and creeping bogey-man. Bigfoot, has always appeared as a far more flesh and blood creature, even if it remains supernatural, but worldwide sightings suggest something real, as it stalks the world in one form or another. Enigmas such as the Bunnyman, Goatman and the West Virginia Mothman, however, exist more as phantoms, weird anti-heroes to our own Spiderman, and they are confined to reasonably small areas such as towns, stretches of woodland and dimly light lanes.

Maryland's Goatman was a confused spectre that never existed as a separate entity but as a sum of parts, a combination of campus legend, genuine

Sasquatch encounters and friend-of-a-friend assumption. It required a name, just as Mothamn, Monkey Man and Lizard Man begged for their names from the local communities that were haunted by them. As demons they were never understood, and they never existed but they have been immortalised in lore, and revitalised behind the flickering flames stoked by college kids who gather every Hallow's Eve to spew out their fabrication and exaggerations. Goatman could have been a monster created by reports of an escaped lunatic, or the myth created when a mad scientist accidentally fell foul to his own hybridisation programmes, or, Goatman was just a story passed down about a reclusive hobo who used to walk the railroad tracks with an axe to chop wood for his remote shack.

They all make good origins of the tale, in the same way the Jersey Devil of New Jersey's Pine Barrens had its seed sown in the possibility that its origin spawned from black magic, curses and witchery. All these spectres need to be moulded by society so they can exist as spooks and monsters. They are given birth places, a shape and a motive to their madness, but very rarely are they ever fathomed.

Bunnyman is no exception to the rule. Every year many drunken youths congregate at 'Bunnyman Bridge', visualising their own paranormal experiences which are quite often misinterpretations to natural phenomena, i.e. fog, atmospheric, and mainly due to no real understanding of the legend. Over the years the tales have become distorted and anecdotal, often rendering any factual evidence as circumstantial and debatable, but behind the myth and the scare stories Bunnyman is, to some extent real, although many students expect to loiter in the fog and be drenched in the blood from dangling corpses or chased by a creature waving an axe, their terror reflected in the shining blade.

The rumours which concern Bunnyman's origins are unfortunately far more eerie than the truth, although the facts are bizarre themselves. For many college kids and amateur investigators who dwell at the bridge, Bunnyman is, or was one of the following:

- a. A satanic recluse who performed sacrifices and was admitted to a psychiatric ward only to escape into the Fairfax woods. From there the

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Lunatic would remain hidden, feeding off the local rabbit populations and using their skins to clothe his body. He would become known as Bunnyman to the local children whose parents became concerned as they frequently heard tales of the sinister 'giant rabbit' that gave their kids candy! Bunnyman's revenge on the community came when the kids he entertained were found hanging from the trees in the nearby woodland, they were pale and bloodless, the crimson fluid used for another of the madman's sacrificial rituals. It was said that after being pursued by the police Bunnyman was hit by a train but his body was never found.

- b. Bunnyman was born from grisly events which involved the eldest son of a family who dressed up as a rabbit one Easter and slaughtered his kin before hanging himself from the bridge. It is said that the legend of Bunnyman originates from the early 1900s although many of the tales stem from the last thirty years, but it is alleged that almost thirty deaths have been reported from the area, many involving victims who have been found hanging at the site.
- a. A local hermit killed a couple of children in the area for trespassing and left their corpses hanging from the bridge. However other tales emerged involving an escaped inmate who bumped off kids whilst dressed as a rabbit
- b. Bunnyman was allegedly born after a few murders in the area that had no real 'bunny' connections but gradually they evolved into local spook stories.

It seems that Bunnyman was actually a (ether)real, unidentified monster of the backwoods similar to Mothman, who plagued the area only to fade into obscurity after its cycle expired.

Strangely enough, whilst many of these options echo other legends such as Goatman, there appears to be some actual recorded evidence of who Bunnyman, or at least the truth behind the legend of Bunnyman, was.

From the *Washington Post*, around the Autumn of 1970 Bunnyman was born.

The headline read:

"MAN IN BUNNY SUIT SOUGHT IN FAIRFAX"

The story read:

"Fairfax County police said yesterday (22nd Oct.) they are looking for a man who likes to wear 'white bunny rabbit costume' and throw hatchets through car windows. Honest!"

Air Force Academy Cadet Robert Bennett told police that shortly after midnight last Sunday he and his fiancée were sitting in a car in the 5400 block of Guinea Road when a man "dressed in a white suit with long bunny ears" ran from the nearby bushes and shouted: "You're on private property and I have your tag number".

The 'rabbit' threw a wooden-handled hatchet through the right front car window, the first-year cadet told police. As soon as he threw the hatchet the rabbit skipped off into the night, police said. Bennett and his fiancée were not injured. Police say they have the hatchet but no other clues in the case. They say Bennett was visiting an uncle who lives across the street from the spot where the car was parked. The cadet was in the area to attend last weekend's Air Force - Navy football game."

A fortnight after the unusual event another report appeared in the Post, this time claiming, "THE RABBIT REAPPEARS":

"A man wearing a furry rabbit suit with two long ears appeared - again - on Guinea Road in Fairfax County Thursday night, police reported, this time wielding an axe and chopping away at a roof support on a new house.

Less than two weeks ago a man described as wearing a rabbit suit accused two persons in a parked car of trespassing and heaved a hatchet through a closed window of the car at 5400 Guinea Road. They were not hurt.

Thursday night's rabbit, wearing a suit described as grey, black and white, was spotted a block away at 5307 Guinea Road. Paul Phillips, a private security guard for a construction company said he saw the 'rabbit' standing on the front porch of a new, but unoccupied house.

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"I started talking to him," Phillips said, "...and that's when he started chopping."

"All you people trespass around here," Phillips said the 'rabbit' told him as he whacked eight gashes in the pole. "If you don't get out of here I'm going to bust you on the head".

Phillips said he walked back to his car to get to his handgun but the 'rabbit', carrying the long-handled axe, ran off into the woods. The security guard said the 'rabbit' was around five-feet eight, 160-pounds and in his early twenties."

In his article, *The Bunnyman Unmasked*, Historian Brian A. Conley, relates the possibility that the legend of the Bunnyman may well have been bolstered by such an appearance, or indeed spawned from this almost 'fortean' happening, which bordered on the surreal instead of the monstrous. Or, had someone acted as a copy-cat to something far more grisly?

These reports of an axe-wielding rabbit were not unique in the area, folklore papers from the time pertaining to the mystery suggest a further fifty-four variations on the story, all containing elements that could have been subtracted from the original story and with fourteen different geographical locations mentioned. Around the 1970's all Bunnyman existed as was a brief news story which eventually became a tale of lore that generally described a figure which on several occasions attacked vehicles and on a few occasions those people within them.

The mystery rabbit-man was also known to vandalise certain property, and to actually attempt to scare those who allegedly wandered on his property, although most reports described the figure as running off into the woods after the incident took place. However, once various possibilities had been put forward, the details shape-shifted to construct an urban-legend like tale which usually ends in some kind of gruesome climax and in most cases describes the Bunnyman as a murderous being which usually haunts one particular area, that being the Colchester Road overpass.

Trawls through internet sources, reports and many books reveal that most reports of the Bunnyman describe a monster-like character, far more related to Goatman than just a man in a suit.

Most people who have heard of the case describe the figure as a child murderer dressed in rabbit skins, or a beast that devours rabbits and hangs human victims from the bridge. This all makes for creepy reading but when we look at the most familiar yet oh so scary urban legends, they all have a familiar ring which actually turns them into unreal bogey-man stories.

Goatman and Bunnyman have become urban legends despite the fact that some gruesome murders did occur within miles of the area although completely unconnected, but for a majority of college kids something akin to 'serial killer on the loose' or 'deranged monster of the woods' fits far better than a small yarn of a crime that has no real atmosphere to it.

The tale of "The Hook" is a very popular urban myth that concerns a psychopath said to haunt many dark, country lanes that are usually shaded, and remote areas for lovers to 'make-out', but The Hook legend has kept many people from venturing into these areas. It is said that such a character is once again, said to be an escaped lunatic who has a hook in place of his right hand.

He is said to prowl the lanes looking for teenage meat, and as the tale goes, terrifies couples who drive off only to find a hook dangling from their car door handle. The Hook is very real to some, although it must be said, such a sinister figure must go through a lot of hooks if he keeps on leaving so many hanging from car doors.

Other contemporary legends such as "The Killer In The Backseat", "The Babysitter", "The Choking Doberman", "The Licked Hand", and "The Scratching" all describe the exploits of escaped lunatics.

These stories tend to filter into society and metamorphose into zooform characters such as Goatman, and even India's Monkey Man, a common legend which connects the belief system, urban myth and the current monkey invasion upon the cities.

However, whilst Mothman, Lizard Man and Goatman are as equally as bizarre as Bunnyman, they all have a slightly more darker, and possibility realistic streak, whereas the thought of a six-foot tall rabbit terrorising a community seems outright daft. Maybe such a legend was born from something simple, such as a rural hobo frustrated at the amount of land nearby being dug up

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for development. During the '70s there was an abundance of property being constructed. However, the rabbit costume seems equally strange, unless it was some obscure message to signify that nature was striking back, or that the man in question had nothing else to disguise himself with, although the various attacks on cars show that whoever the mystery attacker was, he was extremely dangerous to the public. Had such a character merely been distorted over the years to make a genuine-sounding spook story?

Such a legend has been in effect for over twenty years, with television shows such as "Scariest Places On Earth" giving the mystery an airing, although painting a picture more of a gruesome backwoods monster rather than quirky enigma. Hundreds of excited youths hysterically gather in the area, take photos of orbs and hope to discover a few rabbit carcasses, but all to no avail, and yet this cult following snowballs each year, fossilising a horror into the tunnel walls that never existed in the first place.

As stated before, grisly murders did occur in the area, hundreds in fact but only a couple are worth noting. In the 1940s in Fairfax County a man killed his wife and baby, a murder which he had planned for a long time.

They were found buried in a shallow mud grave near to a lodge and boggy track where their vehicle had been stuck.

The couple had argued before the husband beat and shot her before burying the baby alive. Some thirty years before a young woman was murdered at Fairfax after she was strangled and hung from a tree. And ten years after, around 1927 a shocking murder took place at Alexandria and concerned a woman and her two daughters who were beaten to death.

However, despite the grisly aspects of these crimes, there is no evidence to suggest that Bunnyman could have spawned from them. In my opinion, Bunnyman, and Maryland's Goatman both spawn from the same source, that being that some small event has transpired into an overblown spook story in which campfire kids scream, "*The Bunnyman (or Goatman) will get you if.....*".

Even the most surreal creatures that belong in the zooform phenomena bracket, which may or may not include Bigfoot, do not come close to the unrealistic

stature of Bunnyman. Kids know him as a ghost story and picture him as a hairy, possibly rabbit-like monster that wields a sharp blade and picks off the local kids.

Many peculiar creatures seem to appear at certain locations as portents of doom or as symbols of upheaval. A current example is the Goatsucker of Puerto Rico, or a similar entity is appearing in areas of Argentina where there is a great deal of political upheaval. Mothman appeared at Point Pleasant, West Virginia shortly before a bridge collapsed killing a number of people, and creatures such as phantom Black Dogs and giant birds with fiery eyes are also said to symbolise upheaval and misfortune. Could the mysterious Bunnyman have been a minor, albeit brief entity flitting in and out of Fairfax as a way of symbolising the major development in the area, the dumping of debris on various rural sites and the construction of over 1500 homes? It may all seem so bizarre, and yet there have been far weirder monsters that have stepped into this realm of ours - confused characters with a purpose we have never understood.

If anything, the clouded details and 'facts' which concern these 'hearsay' legends add to the effect. The same can be said for the Hookerman of New Jersey, an illuminated phantom said to haunt various railroad tracks as an odd light which hovers around cars, leaving many witnesses to believe that it is the lantern being carried by a spirit of a person that was killed by a train.

Where the Hookerman name comes from I do not know, but many theorists believe that the eerie light formations can be put down to natural causes rather than a vengeful demon.

These hazy recollections always appear as monster stories, flitting in-between serial killer psychosis and downright hysteria on the part of the witnesses, who, on most occasions tend to be a group of slightly unnerved individuals who take to these areas already vulnerable to any creaks or groans within the vicinity.

For me, these beings, or entities are the odd-bodies, creations of our minds that live forever as great tales, yarns spun on stormy nights or around a crackling campfire.

We so desperately want them to be real, despite their ludicrous nature, (i.e. the Jersey Devil appearing as a screeching winged, half-horse, half gargoyle, or Mothman as a winged, leather-skinned spectre, or Goatman as a satyr-cum-hobo with an axe,

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and the Bray Road beast as werewolf-cum-Bigfoot-cum American Indian idol effigy).

It seems to us that they do leave clues (such as skinned rabbits, footprints, shaken eye-witnesses etc) to suggest they are real. The reality is, the only scars they really leave on this planet are on the minds of those who are scared by them. We can all create bogey-men to scare the kids. We have the Sandman who puts sand in our eyes as we sleep, and the Tooth Fairy who tip-toes past our pillow. Yet, we all like to be scared, we love the spook story and we need monsters. The only negative aspect about them is that they may in turn cloud or obstruct the realism of the 'real' monsters out there, the lurking big cats, the allegedly extinct thylacines and maybe the elusive Bigfoot, or maybe, just maybe, they are all friends of the Bunnyman, tricksters and jesters who all attend the Mad Hatter's Tea Party! For those who fear Bunnyman, they know the legend well but only as a misty story that leaves cadavers hanging from bridges, rabbit skins splattered over the road and a constant dread of the Fairfax woodlands. The area is under camera surveillance because the authorities know people will flock there – eager to create their own interpretation of something they have been scared stiff of since they were kids, but something they have never cared to understand.

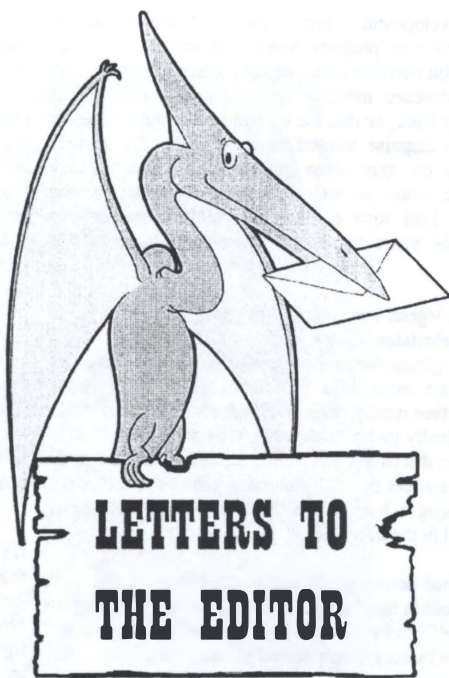
"You must not say his name above a whisper the legend says, because if he hears you, he will come for you"

Promotional quote for 1980's obscure cult horror film MADMAN

Richard Freeman's pointless interjection: I bet it was Ian McCullough all along

PHONE IN COMPY

For a free 4 issue subscription to yer favourite cryptozoological rag be the first to telephone and explain WHY Richard F has given the headlines that he has to this issue's letters, and what have they got in common. The answer "*Because he's Mad*", though true, is not acceptable



The Editor and his band of merry men welcome an exchange of correspondence on any subject of interest to readers of this magazine. We reserve the right to edit letters and would like to stress that opinions voiced are those of the individual correspondent rather than being necessarily those of the editorial team or the Centre for Fortean Zoology. Every attempt is made not to infringe anyone's moral rights or copyright, and we apologise if we have unwittingly done so.

THE FINAL FLIGHT

Dear Jon,

Re. Big Fish Project

Here in Lake Winnebago, which I can see from my house, we also have numbers of fresh-water lake sturgeon that

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never get to the sea. We are known for our wild sturgeon, the largest wild population in the world, and last year hosted a world wide symposium on how to keep this particular species pure and wild among fears that farming would begin of our Lake Sturgeon in order to compete in the caviar market.

<http://www.sturgeonsymposium.org/>.

My next door neighbor, Art Techlow, who is district water manager for the DNR was in charge of arranging local travel.

Our Lake Sturgeon grow to over 5 feet long and around 100 pounds, and have been known to live up to 150 years. Every year in March we have spear fishing for the sturgeon, an event that some of the old timers around here nearly live for. I have personally never gone spearfishing, but those critters are some damned ugly fish

One interesting tidbit surrounding the Lake Winnebago sturgeon is that we have an annual hatch of lake flies in the lake every May that are about as annoying as anything you want to imagine. During the hatch, everything on the west shore of Winnebago is covered with a thick layer of lake flies. People go out of their houses with nets over their mouths so they can breathe without sucking in the insects.

They fly in swarms just above the road that runs along the lake between Neenah and Oshkosh and if you drive through them, you can expect to be scrubbing your windows and front grill for a long time to come. A friend of mine once described the hatch as it rose from the bottom of the lake. She said it was like a massive black cloud that rose until it reached the top of the water, whereupon millions of the half inch flies scattered in clouds towards the shoreline.

These lake flies were planted years ago by a

local scientist who wanted to experiment with them being food for the Lake Sturgeon. As so often happens, the plan went awry, and we are forever stuck with this alien insect. The birds will not even eat these flies, and after the hatch, they collect in doorways, and sidewalks where they need to be swept up and disposed of or area inhabitants are accosted not only with very esthetically offensive piles of dead insects, but a cloying stench as well. As someone who has ridden down the lake road on a motorcycle in the dead center of their hatch, I can advise anyone to try to take an alternate route during the annual hatch.

Just a little info on our sturgeon for ya!!

Love

Felinda Bullock,
Wisconsin

THE GONG MAN

Hi Jon and the boys,

How are things, and what's new and what have you been up to?

Loads of wolves about at the moment as the french government are re-introducing them into the hillsides, but they cause endless problems for the sheep and goat farmers. I feel some of these problems may be also due to husky dogs, as there are loads of the buggers loose, and they are nasty sons of a bitches, and hunt in packs.

I was by a lake on my own fishing in the Pyreneese mountains about 10 months ago, when three of them appeared from nowhere and started getting closer & closer, snarling and showing their teeth. Then one broke away and walked very slowly towards me to check me out, I threw some stones at the bugger but it wasn't bothered

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in the slightest, it just dodged them, so I grabbed my 10 inch hunting knife and when it got close enough, I swiped at it, just catching its nose.

Thankfully that did the trick and they all legged it. It was a strange position to be in, you go through life believing you are superior to most beasts until something like that happens!

There also fluorescent birds down here, I have no idea what the hell they are, they could be plain sea gulls. Only seen them a couple of times when I have been fishing at night, they weren't in flight they were on the ground scavenging, or possibly mating - no idea it was to dark to see!

There has also been alleged sightings of a small creature that looks like a mixture between a scorpion and a snail. I call it the Pyrenean scorpoin snail, but no one to date has photographed it, or retrieved one for examination. I think someone's taking the piss, or more than likely been on the.

Love
Phil Johnston
South of France

THE BUSHES SCREAM AS MY DADDY PRUNES

Dear Jon,

Firstly, the answer to your p.8 query is obviously "Torville's first encounter with Dean on Still water"...

EDITOR'S NOTE: Well done for trying Thomas, but the person who first said "Ice to See You" was Rainier Wolfcastle on an episode of *The Simpsons*

Re. The Florida Sturgeon. When I was last at St Peter's the most common strandings were victims of the nose candy wars of the early '90s. Human ingenuity having no limits, their general condition made the sturgeon look positively blooming.

Nick Redfern's wolf sighting is similar to one we had north of St Peter's. Lying on the actual reservation of the Interstate was the very bloated corpse of a very big fur-ball. It looked like a bear but closer up looked like an oversized chow. He is right about the level of roadkills. I rarely saw anything mammalian more than an inch high.

I was shoulder charged by a bloody great egret one morning! There is something about the place that makes you believe in skunk apes and the like.

Absolutely spiffing Blashers now on board. It must have been hell being an officer and a gentleman whilst in close proximity to Miss Lenska. I'd have cracked on day one.

Another damn cat sighting thirty miles north last week.

Variously identified as a feral hybrid, wildcat, kellas cat, (although neither graceful or black). Di Francis claiming it confirmed her theories. How she can do this beats me as someone had removed the head. No chance with the dental records then. To me it resembled closely a largish *moggie vulgaris* but I could be wrong.

Intrigued by Chris Moiser's piece on lynx reintroduction. Herewith my humble contribution.

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Firstly no-one but *The Guardian* would give credence to somebody called "The Rural Guerillas" existence in Scotland. If their membership actually does exceed one animistic hermit I would be surprised. They sound as big a threat to society as the Scottish Republican Army which blew up a post box in Edinburgh in the 1960s and then melted back into the celtic mix.

The Wild Beasts Trust sounds completely unplugged. The NHS is strapped enough without all those additional paramedics strategically placed around rural Britain waiting to extricate a Bison's horn from one's jacks, or a wolverine from little Tristan's thorax. Recent attempts to reintroduce the wolf have already been dismissed as rabbit and deer control is not the only issue. Scotland's most endangered species – the capercaillie – which has a poor reproduction rate and a propensity for flying into deer fences would be decimated by the introduction of a sizeable predator.

The likely introduction in the future of the European beaver could also suffer from a new predator. It won't happen. The idea of creating a landscape that predates farming is patently tosh and a thousand years too late. Do we erect a transcontinental fence like Australia's rabbit barrier? Maybe breezeblocks with watchtowers from which you could spot the aurochs.

The M25 is already overloaded. How would 'Prescott's Carpark' cope with the seasonal migration of the wildebeest?

Re. Fundraising. How about a 24 hour paranormal investigation service? Richard in a blacked out Reliant Robin. You could call it Gothbusters...

Yours truly,
Tom

THE MESSAGE FROM DISNEYTIME

Dear CFZ,

Thanks for A&M 27. I've read through the back issues I bought at the Unconvention and enjoyed the mix of cryptozoology and *Clash* lyrics. This is the kind of sensibility I've been searching for.

By way of introduction, I've been a special correspondent for *Fortean Times* since 1978 covering the Sussex area with a special interest in meteorology and cryptozoology (sounds like a self-introduction on *University Challenge* doesn't it?) Outside this I've been an angler for over thirty years, read voluminously, listen to all sorts of music, but can't play a note, love comedy (especially the dearly departed Spike Milligan and Viv Stanshall).

Anyway, if I can help CFZ, I'd be glad to do whatever I can.

Were you aware of the imminent demise of the Crucian Carp in British waters? I wasn't and I'm speaking as someone who catches this species on a semi-regular basis and I count myself as experienced enough to recognise Cyprinid hybrids.

Incidentally, I note Jon Downes's involvement investigating the 'Monster of Martin Mere' (*Sunday Express* 28.07.02) and postulating that it might be a (wels) catfish. Speaking as an angler, I'd be surprised if a catfish had attacked a swan. Winton's fishery, here in Burgess Hill – harbours the rod caught British record of 64 lbs. I never caught one then but I've seen a 50lb cat and it's an awesome beast and one which as far as I have heard, may harm mallard, but did not attack the adult Canada geese that live in there. Also, continental European catfish may grow to

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16ft in length, but I doubt if any British-bred cats, even in rich waters, are bigger than 10ft. I fear journalistic exaggeration here – besides, if the water really does harbour a monster British cat, it would surely have resonated along the angling grapevine.

Hope this is of some use. If I come across anything else I'll send it on.

All the best

Alan Gardner
Sussex

WHEN FATHER PAPERED THE PARLOUR

Dear Jon,

You may be interested to know that the possible Wels catfish that has been attacking swans on Martin Mere made the Sci-Tech news on BBC's Ceefax, as well as possibly the main news.

As for the possible survival of dinosaurs, or their descendants, like Gambia's Ninki-Nanka, you may be interested to know, if you haven't already heard, that the Dinosaur Museum in Dorchester (well worth a look, if you can make it through the crowds of naturally excited children and harassed parents) contains a short item entitled '*Have Dinosaurs Survived Today?*' on Mokele-Mbembe, as well as a model of the intelligent reptile into which Dinosaurs may have evolved had the K/T event not occurred according to the theories of Dr. Dale Russell.

With its large, protuberant eyes and small stature - it's only about four foot tall, it does indeed look somewhat like a grey and I overheard several of the other visitors indeed remark that it was an alien.

I have to say, however, that I don't believe the Greys have any objective reality, and the Dinosauroid, fascinating though it is, remains only a possibility. Unless the Greys really are Dinosauroid visitors from a parallel dimension where the asteroid impact that ended the reign of the terrible lizards 65 million years ago never happened.

Thank you once again for your letter. I hope everything is correct, and look forward to receiving my next issues of *Animals and Men*.

Yours sincerely,

David Sivier,
Bristol

MUMMY YOU'RE A WRECK

Dear Sir(s),

I am very sorry to hear of the personal tragedies and upsets which continue to befall the staff and especially the editor.

Although I will continue to support the journal through subscription during the coming year, I may decide not to extend my support of beyond that date.

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There has been disappointingly little development in the quality of the journal's content since it began, and there seems to be a reluctance to press home the standards that would be required to achieve this.

As an example, a contributor presenting big cat reports from Kent (issue 26), three pages before crudely dismissing earlier suggestions (issue 22) of a lack of field knowledge among cryptozoological researchers, innocently informs us that there are Ravens *Corvus corax* on the Isle of Sheppey. Another writer (issue 22) supplies recollections of seeing large birds in childhood, but his claim of an 8-9 foot wingspan for a supposed Golden Eagle is only just above the accepted maximum for this species, and there are no substantial grounds for regarding this as an unusual observation. Until contributors apply greater self-discipline, their occasional complaints of critical pedantry or scientific narrow-mindedness will continue to ring hollow.

On a separate point, I would draw the CFZ's attention to a recent publication by Michael Clark (*Mammals, Amphibians and Reptiles of Hertfordshire*, Herts Nat Hist Soc/Training Publications, 2001). Apart from being of interest as an excellent county fauna, there is also a five-page Appendix listing nearly ninety alleged big cat sightings in Hertfordshire between 1995 and 2000, which may cheer those who believe that there is no interest in such reports among the 'mainstream' natural history community.

The book is available from Training Publications, PO Box 75, Stockport, Cheshire SK4 1PH @£20 plus £4.50 postage and packing.

The current feral populations of exotic parakeets in Britain were summarised in a

recent (2002) issue of the popular journal *British Birds*.

With best wishes

C.M.Everett
Watford

MOTOR TOWN

Dear Jon,

I read that you are after wels catfish, or rather swan-eating wels catfish. Being a fisherman I've heard a few stories from around the midlands that sound like these buggers. I think that there are more than a few waters with huge cats lurking in their depths. Also a few alligator snapping turtles.

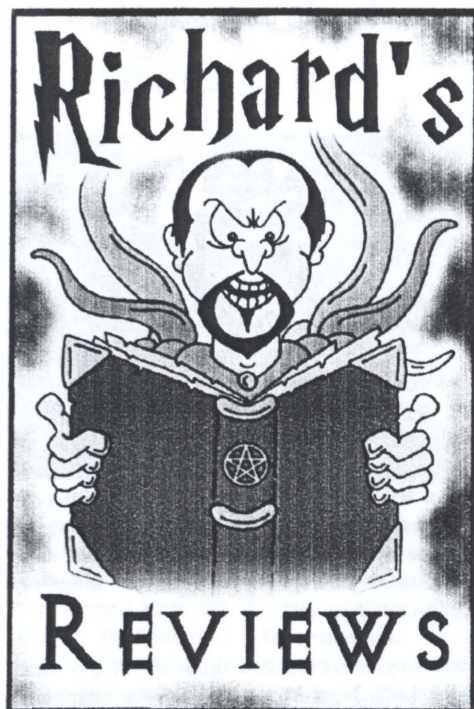
By the way, what do you think about the idea that the Loch Ness Monster is a large snapping turtle?

Regards

Stephen Cooper
Birmingham

EDITOR's COMMENT: I have always had a sneaking suspicion that some of the African lake monsters could be giant softshells. In his first book Gerald Durrell described a huge specimen of *Trionyx niloticus* which seems larger than any that has been officially recorded. Recent events in Vietnam prove that cryptozoology has a lot to learn about softshells as a whole. However, I would be extremely surprised if one of these creatures, no matter how massive, could survive in Scotland's largest lake...

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by Richard Freeman,
except where otherwise noted

Books

Dark Dorset

Robert. J. Newland and Mark J.
North (Oakmagic £12.95)
ISBN: 1 904330 00 2

This book is of interest to readers of this magazine for several reasons. Firstly it is unusual amongst the plethora of regional mysteries books which can be found all over the UK and, indeed the United States. Unlike

so many of these books which merely rehash the same old stories in an unconvincing and uninterested tone, this book is truly a work of scholarship.

Secondly, it contains much information of interest to the fortaean zoologist. In its pages are accounts of the spectral black dogs of the county, but whereas other books on this theme are content merely to rehash the same stories over again this book contains both analysis and a novel interpretation of the ancient legends, presenting a whole new hypothesis.

As well as the black dogs, other fortaean zoological titbits include mermaids, big cats and other things 'which go bump in the night', all discussed with élan and flair.

Thirdly, this book is co-authored by none other than our very own Mark North, which means that as well as the excellent text there are some stunning illustrations which will surely establish North as one of the leading illustrators of fortaena at the beginning of the 21st Century. It is impossible to criticise this excellent book, and I strongly urge all readers of this magazine to go out and buy it today. **Jon Downes**

The Dragon Hunter's Handbook

Lori Summers
(Penguin £4.99)
ISBN 0-14-131486-9

This is a book aimed at young teenagers and purports to be a guide for would be dragon hunters. It is, of course, just a bit of fun but it is infuriating in its total lack of research and shameful inaccuracy. For instance we are told that the Komodo dragon lives on the Galapagos islands. Its list of recommended reading is almost entirely novels. She furthermore states that sharks are *not* fish due to

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having a cartilage skeleton! We are told dragons hate hot climates, how about all the legends and modern day sightings in the tropics?

One wonders how much Ms Summers got paid for this infantile garbage or how she would react if she were told that people are still reporting dragons in the 21st century.

Film

Reign of Fire

Director: Rob Bowman

There has never been a truly satisfactory film about dragons. This is strange as these are the most ancient, formidable, and widespread of all monsters. The closest was Disney's 1981 outing *Dragonslayer*. This film fails dismally.

On paper it is a fantastic concept, dragons return to modern-day England and wipe out mankind. In execution this superb idea melted like a knight's armour under a wyrm's breath.

For starters the creatures in the film were *not* dragons but wyverns. A dragon has four legs and two wings whereas a wyvern has only two legs and two wings.. The same stupid mistake has been made in both *Dragonslayer* and the first Harry Potter movie. Don't film makers do *any* research? The animation was marvellous but it cannot hide inaccuracies,

The plot is painting by numbers, cookie cutter crap. After an evocative start where a hibernating dragon is uncovered by workers digging beneath the Underground, things slip fast. The poster promised scenes of London beset by hordes of dragons destroying the airforce and army. However this is told via a voice-over and some old newspaper cuttings

(cheap guys, very cheap). The heroes are a small band of Brits led by Quinn (Christian Bale) whose mother helped uncover the dragon 20 years earlier and paid with her life. Hiding out in a Northumbrian castle they eek a meagre existence.

Quinn's tribe are contacted by a group of Americans (surprise, surprise) who have also survived and figured out a way to kill the mighty dragons. Their leader Van Zan (Matthew Mc Conaughey) who bears an odd resemblance to 'Bomber', Pat Roache's character in *Auf Wiedersehen Pet*, convinces Quinn to travel to London to hunt the king dragon.

It is never explained how one lone dragon can multiply into millions in 20 years, or why there is only one male dragon.

The plot is so predictable it could have been written by an 8 year old. Hero's best mate is killed, rivalry between main male characters, one hero dies the other survives and gets girl, humans win.

It would have been so much better if the dragons had won. Oh and for the record I very much doubt if you can kill a 150 foot dragon by shooting a magnesium flare into it's mouth.

So there is still to be the definitive dragon film. Why don't they just let cryptozoologists write the damn scripts?

Brotherhood of the Wolf

Director: Christophe Gans

A big screen adaptation of the true life saga of the beast of le Gevaudan. What a great idea albeit long overdue. This film does not disappoint and is the perfect antidote for formulaised Hollywood crap. Naturalist Gregoire de Fransac (played by Samuel le

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Bihan) is a zoologist sent by King Louis XV to investigate the depredations of the infamous beast. He is accompanied by Mani (Mark Dacascos) a Mohawk Indian he befriended in the new world. Mani is a whiz at martial arts but it is never explained how a north American Indian had such knowledge 300 years ago!

With a combination of Mani's native tracking skills and Fransac's zoological knowledge they track the beast. It soon becomes apparent that what ever is chomping its way through the populace is no wolf but something far more savage and seemingly invulnerable. The pair also stumble upon a secret society, "The Brotherhood of the Wolf", who have sinister plans for the crown and country.

Beautifully shot and splendidly acted, this film is full of twists and surprises. It matches action to a well crafted plot. Filmmakers elsewhere would do well to take note.

On its theatrical release *Brotherhood of the Wolf* did poorly (it was shown in my home town for only three days!) This is typical of the puny mentality of the public. They would rather see Bruce Willis grunt his way through crap for the pre-potty trained. Their loss.

CD ROM

Mariposas de Nicaragua By Dr Jean-Michel Maes & Ronald Brabant

Lucanidae of Thailand by Amnuay Pinratana and Jean-Michel Maes

Written in HTML, ie the code that most web pages use, this product requires a browser before it can be viewed (which surely almost everyone has, these days). In that respect, it's a website that happens to be on a CD rather than on the Web. Cleanly presented in uncluttered form - even the relative complexity of frames is avoided, and with a high proportion of pictures to text, giving each page a visually satisfying appearance.

The bifurcating divisions from family (*papilionidae*, *pieridae* & *nymphalidae*) through subfamily, tribe & on down to genus are all clickable, so one can follow any given thread and end up with pics and Spanish text on a specific butterfly.

I don't speak much Spanish, but since the site architecture follows the framework of latin names, this CD ROM can be used by any non-Spanish-speaking people.

The second CD - dealing with the Lucanidae or stag beetles of Thailand is even easier to use - for me at least - because it is written primarily in English. Dr Maes should be congratulated for these two excellent additions to the library of any dedicated zoologist or entomologist. **Graham Inglis**

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PERIODICAL Exchange

We welcome an exchange with publications which cover subjects of mutual interest. Because of lack of space we can only mention publications which we have received during the last three months.

**British Columbia Scientific
Cryptozoology Club,**
3773 West 18th Avenue,
Vancouver,
B C,
V6S 1B3,
Canada

An interesting newsletter which contains news, expedition reports and much of interest from this fine society.

'DEAD OF NIGHT',
156 Bolton Road East,
New Ferry,
Merseyside,
L62 4RY

For years this has been our favourite paranormal publication. Though home made and photocopied it has a breadth of subject and high standards of writing that would put many professional publications to shame.

TEMS News,
115 Hollybush Lane,
Hampton,
Middx, TW12 8QY

Lionel Beer publishes this newsletter of the Travel and Earth Mysteries Society. It is an amusing, and often fascinating miscellany of quasi forteen odds and sods and is highly recommended.

'Fortean Times',
Box 2409,
LONDON,
NW5 4NP

One American magazine once described FT as the 'Granddaddy' of Fortean Publications. Whilst

nitpickers would probably say that this honour should really go to *Fate* (published for over fifty years) or *Psychic News* (considerably longer), FT is now thirty years old. Bob and Paul should be commended for having stuck it out so long in an often thankless marketplace.

Essex Reptiles & Amphibians Society

Mrs V Clark, 6 Chestnut
Way, Tiptree, Colchester, Essex, CO5
ONX

The hobby of reptile keeping is becoming increasingly beleaguered these days. So-called animal rights activists, who are in reality nothing more than blinkered zealots are responsible for closing shops and shows and branding people, like the CFZ indeed, who keep exotic herps in captivity as inhuman monsters. In this current political climate it is comforting to find a magazine like this which dispenses news, hints, veterinary advice and society information with humour and style.

Porcupine!,

Dept of Ecology & Biodiversity,
University of Hong Kong,
Pokhilam Road,
Hong Kong

This, the journal of the Hong Kong and South China Biodiversity and Ecology survey has much of interest to the forteen zoologist as well as the conservationist. As noted regularly in these pages, Hong Kong is a veritable living laboratory full of enigmatic fauna. The style is eminently readable, and combines academia with a friendly and helpful style.

Touchstone

Amskaya
Surrey Earth Mysteries,
25 Albert Road,
Addlestone,
Surrey

Jimmy Goddard is the editor of these two long standing small press publications which deal with Earth Mysteries and the more mystical edge of UFOs.

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WYRD

56 Fore Street,
Totnes TQ9 5RU
United Kingdom

This is the sister magazine to *Animals & Men* and covers the non zoological aspects of the fortean universe. The editorial team behind *Animals & Men* tried to publish a generic fortean magazine a few years ago with *The Goblin Universe*, but it was a signal failure. Although it is owned by CFZ Communications, *Wyrd* is solely the responsibility of editor Bob Mann who has done an excellent job in making *Wyrd* a scholarly and intelligent fortean journal of letters.

The Anomalist

PO Box 12434,
San Antonio,
TX 78212
United States

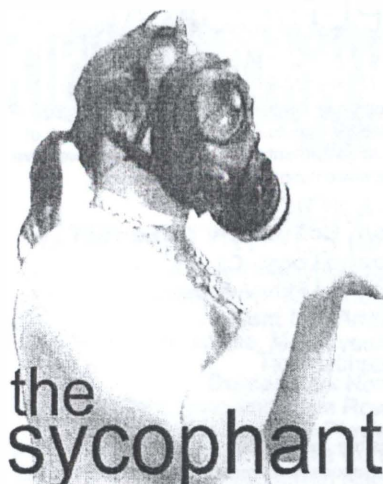
Now published only once a year *The Anomalist* is still the best forum for academic fortean discussion in the world, and unless *Fortean Studies* resurfaces (which at the moment seems unlikely) it is likely to remain so. Stylish and witty, literate and intelligent this is another journal which really cannot be faulted.

Bite Me

Studio 155
355 Byres Rd
Glasgow G128QZ

Brainchild of Arlene Russo this is a mag for Goths and vampire fanatics. Each page is incardining with info on vampires in folklore, tv, books, and film. Plus articles on other areas of Forteana and indeed anything weird and gothic. Dozens of pics of heart stopping Goth goddesses make this one of my favourite mags.

As a matter of policy we do not
publish prices or schedules knowing
as we do the vagaries of such things



Deep in a secret hideaway beneath Loch Ness, a shadowy figure steals ideas from other magazines and generally writes amusing rubbish about who's who and what's what in the world of cryptozoology...

TROUT MASK REPLICA

At the second *Weird Weekend*, Tim Matthews made an amusing comment. "*It is not true that my research is funded by the FBI, MI6 or the CIA. However I CAN announce that Jon Downes's research is funded by the DSS.*"

Its funny 'cos it's true, as Homer Simpson would say, but it's true no longer. The Sycophant can exclusively reveal that the CFZ now have a new form of income – dressing little girls up as Captain Beefheart!

It's true. Jon and Richard write the kids pages for *Tropical Fish* magazine, and in their October issue there is a competition for the very best

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hallowe'en fish costume. It is accompanied by the following picture....



Look familiar at all?



Still vaguely on the subject of Captain Beefheart, Ian Simmons once described a publicity photograph of the CFZ as looking somewhat like Captain Beefheart and the Magic Band c. 1969. He had a point but I think that the latest CFZ publicity pix make them look more like *Public Enemy*.



It takes a nation of cryptids to hold them back?

New boy, John Fuller (centre) is actually a distant relative of the late Emperor of Ethiopia. Rastafarians believe that Haile Selassie (Jah Rastafari) was/is a living God. If this deification extends to his family then the CFZ have a Godhead making their tea in the mornings. Weird old world innit? So what do we make of this pic then? The sycophant can reveal that Agent Hepple has successfully infiltrated the Ethiopian Royal Family...

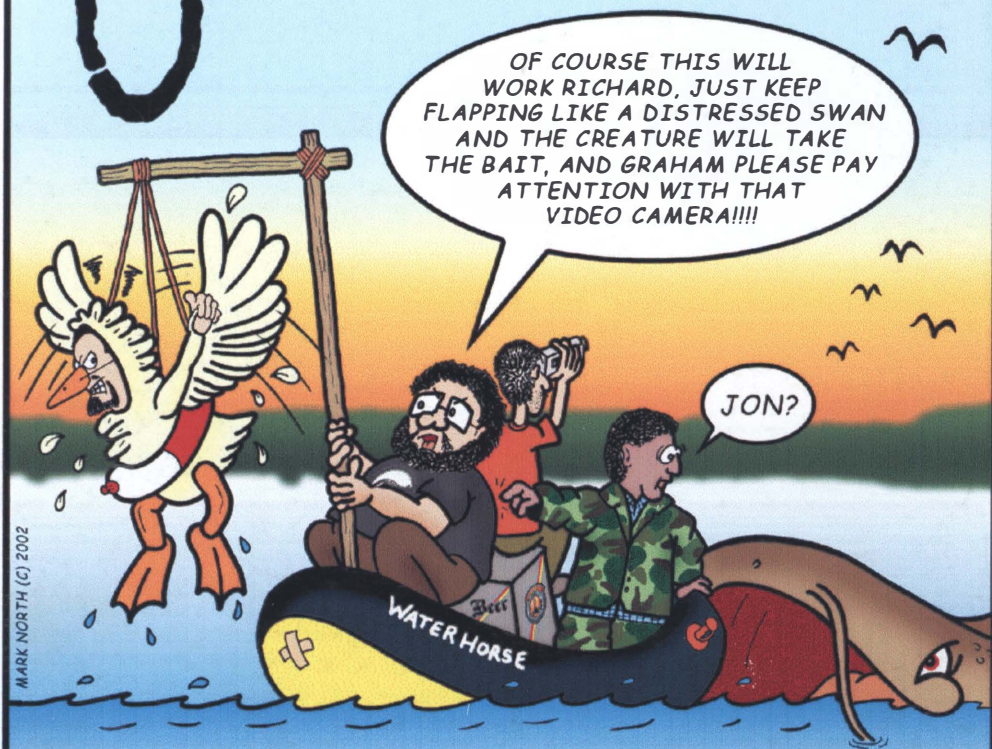


THE

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RYPTOZOOLOGY FILES

BY MARK NORTH



LOCATION: MARTIN MERE,
LANCASHIRE, ENGLAND.
CASE: MONSTER FISH.

AFTER DISCOVERING THE MARTIN MERE MONSTER'S SECRET HIDING PLACE THE BOYS FROM THE C.F.Z USE THE LATEST SCIENTIFIC METHODS IN LURING THE CREATURE OUT.

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"Everything you can think of is true. The baby's asleep in the SHOE"